

A SHORT TRIP
IN
HUNGARY AND TRANSYLVANIA
IN THE SPRING OF 1862.

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BY

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ETC.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following pages contain little more than the personal narrative of a rapid trip to a part of Europe less known and visited than it appears to the Author to deserve. Aware that there are certain requirements of travel so far indispensable that no country without them is practically accessible to the long vacation tourist, whose time is limited, and who does not always desire to incur unknown expense in his journey, the Author believes that a plain statement of what he has done and seen in Hungary during the present season may induce many to visit that country who would otherwise have returned to the well-travelled resorts in Switzerland, the Tyrol, and other familiar places, often previously explored and described. He also thinks

that by suggesting for investigation certain portions of Hungary and the Carpathians, he may induce some of his natural history friends to extend their excursions and help to fill up the *lacunæ* in that part of European investigation.

Such being the object he has in view, he has endeavoured sometimes to suggest subjects of enquiry, and sometimes to assist the reader by reminding him of what others have already said and done. Thus, in the last chapter, he has put together a brief account of political events, without a knowledge of which the present state of Magyar feeling is not easily appreciated. Having had some little trouble himself in putting the facts in order, he trusts he may save trouble to others by the brief narrative.

The book has been written rapidly, and with little aid from without. It does not pretend to exhaust the subject, and it may be that others will receive different impressions if they follow the same route. This is, however, the fate of all personal narrative. The feelings of the writer, the accidental circumstances of time, place, association, health, and weather, all help to make up the impression, and it is quite impossible that these should be exactly repeated.

These remarks are offered, not so much to excuse error or neglect as to claim the reasonable indulgence which the case deserves. The object of the Author's trip was not to write an account of his journey, but to make a special and careful investigation of a particular department of practical science. What he has described is, therefore, rather what passed before him than what he went out to see.

IMPINGTON HALL, CAMBRIDGE,

July 25, 1862.

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A SHORT TRIP

IN

HUNGARY AND TRANSYLVANIA.

CHAPTER I.

- Hungary as a Country for the Tourist.—Its Highways and Byeways.

IN a certain sense, and that a very important one, Hungary is a new country to the European tourist. Before the revolution of 1848, the policy of Austria was to shut it off from all communication with the rest of Europe. All the usual passport and police regulations, troublesome enough in any case, were doubled when Hungary was the point to be reached; and few travellers cared to undergo the certain trouble for a very uncertain return of instruction and amusement.

For when the effort was made, and the country was entered, the case was little better. Presburg might be reached within a reasonable time; but Presburg, after all, was more Austrian than Magyar. Pesth came next. A young city was rising into interest, growing up by the side of the old town—half-Turkish, half-nondescript—of Ofen or Buda. Very uncomfortable steamers conveyed the determined voyager down the

Danube to Pesth, and he must trust to the far-famed Peasant's Post to gallop back to Vienna in an open cart as well as he could, taking some forty hours for the journey. Now and then a geologist would penetrate to Chemnitz or Nagyag, to see the celebrated mining school, or the mines of gold and tellurium ; but for ordinary travellers, seeking rational amusement in their peregrinations, there was little inducement to select Hungary as the object of their trip.

And if any one had attempted to study the real country of Hungary and the people, he certainly would have found great difficulty, and must have given up a considerable time, a quarter of a century ago. Railroads had not then rendered the access to Eastern Europe an easy and pleasant matter. Steamboats in that part of the world were struggling for existence, barely able to pay their way, and quite unable to think of providing comforts for those who patronized them. Bad speed, bad accommodation, bad food, very uncertain progress, and very certain delays, combined to limit the passenger traffic to a very small amount.

The frontier passed, or the landing at some town from the steamboat effected, the case was even worse than before. The roads were impassable in wet weather, and enveloped in clouds of choking dust in dry seasons. Inns were places in which dirt and discomfort were the only things that could reasonably be expected. Nor were the people more satisfactory than the country ; for although the upper classes were always well instructed and hospitable, and essentially

gentlemen, they could rarely fall in the way of the occasional traveller, who was thus for the most part obliged to associate with the peasants. These were uninstructed, speaking no language but their own curious Oriental dialect, which has few, if any, affinities with any other in Europe, and were unable to give help because they had no idea of what might be wanted by those so accustomed to luxuries as to regard them as necessities of life. No wonder, then, that Hungary was unvisited twenty-five years ago.

But at a much later period Hungary is described in the best guide books as an unapproachable country. Opening "Murray's Handbook for Southern Europe" (seventh edition, published in 1858), we read in page 487, "It is, indeed, difficult for Englishmen to obtain permission at all to enter Hungary. Even should the traveller succeed, he will probably obtain only a limited leave for a certain number of days;" and the dicta of Paget, writing in 1837, admirable as they once may have been, are quoted as the facts of to-day. The Hungary of the present is not, however, in any sense the Hungary there described. The traveller enters it and passes through it at his pleasure, and quits it when convenient without discovering that there is a frontier, or that passports exist. The pistols recommended on the ground that bands of robbers may be met, are as needless as they would be in France or Germany, and the inns, so much maligned, are in all points fully equal to the ordinary run of those in countries little accustomed to visitors, and in many respects much

better. In the larger towns there will be found all the most modern appliances. Droschkys or cabs ply at the railway stations at moderate fares fixed by law, and carry the traveller to hotels where the smiling waiter, with his white napkin, is in attendance ; where the inevitable loud clang announces the arrival of the guest to the boots and chambermaid ; where the well-appointed and perfectly clean and comfortable bedroom is shown ready for immediate use for one or more as required ; and where the two candles, whether used or not, will appear in the bill next morning, just as in the great capitals of Western Europe. In the larger towns, and in many of the smaller ones, excellent cafés will be found, and the coffee or ices supplied are not excelled in Paris. The Hungarians, in this last respect, show something of their Eastern origin. Nowhere in Europe is better coffee made, and even in the little country inns where one would expect to find nothing, one may often obtain this luxury in perfection at very brief notice.

Travelling in Hungary is really now so easy and so pleasant, that there is no reason why the artist, the professional man, and even the typical tourist should not take advantage of a district in Europe where it is possible to obtain new sensations, to visit scenery not hackneyed, to study a people not yet spoiled by a large influx of travellers, and to meet those moderate difficulties and little hardships that are not only perfectly endurable, but almost pleasurable by their novelty. There are forests in Hungary, only a very few days'

journey from populous cities, where the bear and the wolf are extremely abundant, and are accompanied by the lynx, of which individuals have been shot not much inferior in size to the leopard. The rivers of Hungary abound with fish of kinds seen in no other European waters. Birds from Africa are frequent visitors, and establish themselves in noble primeval forests of beech, such as are not to be found elsewhere in the Western world. Not far off are mountains, whose snowy caps are rarely doffed, and which give rise to streams and torrents, sometimes falling over lofty precipices, sometimes foaming in narrow, tortuous channels, and sometimes rushing over golden sands, or amongst broken but gigantic fragments of the rocks they have undermined. Even reptiles of rare forms and colours are not wanting; and of the insect world there are flights of locusts only rivalled in Asia Minor, and a peculiarly troublesome fly, a kind of *tsetse* of the Danube, also absolutely local. The geologist will find in the beds of some of the rivers, and in the mountains, rare and valuable minerals. The palaeontologist may study the innumerable fossils obtained from the plains and bed of the Theiss, one of the richest localities in the world for gigantic bones. The antiquarian will follow with interest the course of Roman conquest in one of the most remarkable of the progresses made by that singular people, and may enrich his museum with rare coins and rarer and more interesting household utensils, manufactured after classical models, of the fine gold of the country.

And the Hungary of to-day is not unapproachable. An excellent railroad sends out its long arms of scores and even hundreds of miles in two or three directions, already penetrating far within the country, and likely soon to traverse it and reach the shores of the Black Sea. Very decent high roads connect the principal towns. Excellent accommodation, good food and wine, and often extreme cleanliness, will be found in the large towns, and even in some of the smaller ones, and the post or some diligence communicates from one to another. Noble steamboats, as much superior in size and accommodation to those of the Rhine as these are to a Gravesend packet, run down the rapid streams with extreme swiftness, and mount against the current at the rate of eight miles an hour. Such steamboats, or others somewhat smaller but also well appointed, navigate the great feeders of the Danube in Hungary, and are formidable rivals to the railway. There is no want of punctuality in these boats; they are as sure to make their time as they are pleasant to travel in. They are clean, not crowded, except during fair times, and have an excellent cuisine. It is true that the Peasant's Post, so vaunted in former times, is now a thing of the past, but the loss is more than made up on the main roads, and in others it was never very manageable. The postal conveyances (*eil-wagen*), though certainly not rapid, are comfortable enough, and carry the traveller well enough from town to town. A very elementary cart, or *char-a-banc*, better adapted to the state of Hungarian cross roads than to the

comfort of the traveller, can be hired to go from one place to another on the cross roads, and little horses, strong and hardy enough, if with no other pleasant qualities, may be depended on for the passes and for places otherwise inaccessible. Covered carts may sometimes be obtained.

Hungary is a large country, and, except by railways and steamboats, progress through it is still slow. But it is already in a state well adapted to the hardy tourist. In a few hours from Vienna he can reach a point of interest from which to start in the pursuit of his own special object. The Carpathians almost enclose Hungary to the north, east, and south. The country is crossed by the Danube, the Theiss, the Drave, the Temes, the Raab, the Maros, and other rivers, the smallest of them, although only secondary streams or even feeders of these, possessing all the characteristics of rivers, and being navigable for a long distance. It has two noble lakes ; one of them; the Platten See, the largest in Europe, and not the least picturesque. It includes vast plains, compared with which other European plains are as nothing. There are numerous tracts of low wooded upland, many picturesque open valleys, and innumerable rocky mountain gorges.

To visit all these would require much time and much labour. But to examine some one corner is the work that may be done in a few weeks, and partakes of the nature of recreation. To describe such a tour is the object of the following pages.

The climate of Hungary is excessive. Extreme

cold during winter is succeeded by a rapid and beautiful spring, with occasional heavy rain. Later in spring (in May) the sun attains a power seldom reached even during the hottest part of summer in our island, and there are intervals of storm of an almost tropical character, during which incredible quantities of rain sometimes fall. The roads, passable during the dry season with little difficulty or danger, then become quite unmanageable; side paths are followed, and the road is thus widened for a time, but the new path is soon as bad as the old. Attempts are made to escape the temporary difficulty, but scarcely ever to do away with the evil by permanently constructing a road on proper principles. Not unfrequently a temporary torrent will carry away part of a road, or a whole series of small bridges. The rain penetrates far into the loose open soil of the plains, and when hot, dry weather succeeds, the ground cracks and gapes; into these cracks the next rain makes its way, and widens them enormously, often undermining the road. But in many cases the road is merely an accidental path across open country, and never had a foundation of any kind; such a road is at the mercy of every change of weather.

Still, although this is the case in cross roads, and from one small town to another where there is little traffic, it is generally possible in fair weather to travel across the country in any direction, with no great discomfort. From thirty to forty, and even sometimes fifty miles, can be got over in a day, in a country cart, with the

same horses throughout. By a great effort I have, on occasion, done even more than this. It is often difficult, if not impossible, to get fresh horses, and to take up one's abode for the night in some of the villages is not very tempting; but in bad weather the traveller must be prepared either to stop or to go out of his way distances which in some cases are much more than double the distance between the places by a nearer road, and which, besides, neglect the points of greatest interest.

Most, if not all, of the entrances to the mountain districts of Hungary from the west are tolerably accessible by good roads; but with regard to the roads out of Hungary towards the east, south, south-east, and north-east, the case is different. Very few passes of any kind exist across the Carpathians, and few of these can be traversed in a carriage. A great wall of rock belonging to these grand mountains rises frowningly all around, and although it is broken through here and there by rivers, such river channels cannot be made available for any other kind of roads than railroads, and that is not yet attempted. The passes across all the mountains are at a great elevation, and most of them can only be travelled on horseback.

So far, then, as roads are concerned, Hungary is still in a very elementary state. On the great plains there are often no made roads, for an excellent reason, namely, that there are no stones to make them of, obtainable within any reasonable distance. In the open valleys and near rocks, wherever roads exist, they

are in tolerable order ; in the narrow valleys, and more in the recesses of mountain country, they either disappear altogether, or the path adopted is the bed of the stream. Of course, under these circumstances, there will be occasional difficulties, and when the river occasionally carries down a large body of water the channels and the fords where the water has to be crossed are sometimes dangerous. To a person, however, who is accustomed to rough travelling in other countries, there is little in Hungary that will be complained of; it is certainly far easier and more agreeable, as well as safer than most parts of Spain.

In travelling in Hungary the German language will almost everywhere be found sufficient for the general traveller, for throughout the country there are many Germans, and they form a very active part of the population. The inns are almost always kept by them. There is more difficulty with the driver of one's cart, or *char-a-banc*, but he also can generally understand if he thinks it worth his while to do so. There is at present a strong national feeling among Hungarians, and many speak their own very peculiar language more from pride and anti-Germanism than from necessity. Englishmen, however, who are known to sympathize with their love of liberty, will almost always find themselves understood.

With regard to the names of places, it may be useful to explain the pronunciation of certain letters in Hungarian, as they differ much from other European languages : thus *s* is always pronounced *sh*; *Boksan*,

for instance, is pronounced *Bokshan*; *sz* is pronounced like *s* alone, thus *Szaeszka* is *Saska*; *z* alone is pronounced a little harder than with *us*; *zs* is pronounced exactly like *j* in English, thus *Zsil* is pronounced *Jil*; *cz* is *ts*, thus *Oravicza* is *Oravitsa*; and *cs* is *tch*, as *Mohacs* is pronounced *Mohatch*. The final *y* is entirely dropped, thus *Lunkany* is simply *Lun-Kan*.

But in the south of Hungary, the language used by the common people is almost exclusively the Romaic dialect of Wallachia, a curious mixture of Italian and Turkish, the Latin element greatly preponderating. It is a kind of *lingua franca*. When a man wishes to swear by the Devil, he appeals to *draco*, the Dragon; when he speaks of a house he calls it *casa*, and so with a multitude of common words. This language would certainly be acquired much more readily than the Hungarian, but it is only needed to communicate with the peasants. The upper classes among the Wallachs speak French and German.

The Hungarian is very easily recognized, not only by his strongly-marked physiognomy and the singular breadth of the back of the head between the ears, but by his peculiar and drawling mode of speaking either his own language or German. The Hungarian language is essentially Asiatic, and has no resemblance to any European dialect except Turkish, of which the grammar and all the inflexions are peculiar. It must be difficult for a German or Englishman to learn, and seems to require this slow method of speaking. Every part of every word is said to have a meaning, and every

word is altered to adapt itself to gender, number, and case. The root of each word in Hungarian is said by the people themselves to be apparent through every modification. When a Hungarian speaks German he somewhat affects to utter his thoughts with difficulty in a foreign language, and drawls out his sentences in a very curious way. I noticed this especially in the railway carriages, where there is a considerable mixture of races, and where each exhibits his peculiarities.

The Hungarian language is said to be very rich, and it certainly has a large literature. I observed a number of modern works recently published and exhibited for sale both in Vienna and Pesth, and there is no doubt that every effort is made to increase the use of the language among the people. It is not easy to say how far this may be successful, but it is certainly not an easy task to retain in a healthy and vigorous state a dialect or language confined to a small population, most of whom must, for the sake of communication with the world, make familiar use of at least one other tongue.

Since the revolution of 1848, the policy of Austria has been to denationalize Hungary, and the reactionary policy of the Hungarians has induced them to revert as far as possible to all their older customs. Everywhere the government of the towns has been taken away from the local authorities, and is conducted by Austrian officials from a distance. The blue uniform of the Austrian revenue collector is seen in every village, and the wearers of it too often render themselves

unnecessarily unpopular. A kind of military despotism, and a perpetual state of martial law, prevails everywhere, so far as the official arrangements are concerned, and whatever violence and misconduct is committed by the police there is little redress. All this is part of a system which may or may not succeed in keeping down and ultimately destroying the national feeling, but it does not render Austria popular. It in no way, however, interferes with the progress of the traveller, especially the Englishman, who need not trouble himself with local politics.

Results of this system present themselves, indeed, now and then to his sight, and there is certainly a tendency to press very hardly on the peasant class. A few days before my visit to one of the out of the way valleys, in which are several small villages, a dispute had arisen during a festival on the occasion of a wedding. The officials accused the giver of the feast of having smuggled some of the drinks in use. It was denied; but the revenue officer declared the wine should not be used. The peasants refused to give way, and the result was, that they were attacked and several killed. No inquiry seemed likely to follow this outrage. No wonder the Austrians are unpopular.

Neither must it be forgotten that while, to a certain extent, improving the country, the Austrian government has enforced heavy payment for the advantages afforded. The tax on tobacco is so heavy and the interference in its manufacture so troublesome, that the Hungarian tobacco, once the best in Europe, is now

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hardly to be got. Cigars are more commonly smoked than pipes, and the best of these are from Cuba. Each town is required to bear its part, and no light part, in the burden imposed on the country by the military extravagance of Austria, and the determination to retain to the last moment a hold in Italy is felt as an incubus in the remotest villages throughout the Austrian empire.

So vast is the difference this has already made, that one small town in the Siebenbürgen, which formerly only paid public taxes to the extent of 1200 florins, or £120, now pays as much as £8000, and that without the condition or wealth of the people being improved. It is not surprising that a serious amount of disaffection to the central Government should be felt, or that the Magyar should long for his national assembly at Pesth, and desire the re-establishment of a state of affairs when he was not only personally free, but was charged with no other expenditure than that imposed for the benefit of his own country.

One consequence of this is seen in the resumption of the national costume and old language amongst the higher classes. A Hungarian gentleman is known at once by certain peculiarities of dress—such as the tight-fitting pantaloons and Hessian boots, and also by the coat, and almost all articles of dress being embroidered in a peculiar manner. To an eye not very critical in the mysteries of female costume, the ladies seem dressed much in the style required by modern fashion; but I was told that in a peculiar jacket, and some other

matters, a patriotic cut might always be detected. · The Latin language, not long ago more generally taught and spoken in Hungary than in any other part of Europe, has now given way almost entirely to the native Magyar among the younger men. English, however, is popular, and the sympathy of Englishmen with the patriotic aspirations of the more instructed class, is assumed as a matter of course. In society it is evident that the native language is now usual among all classes, but all speak German; and in compliment to the English visitor, I have generally heard German spoken at table. I believe, however, it is seldom heard when a party of Hungarians are together.

The Hungarian noble is no longer the feudal lord he once was; but, on the other hand, the peasant is no longer the serf. It would be difficult for anyone not perfectly familiar with the Hungarian language, and unable to penetrate deeply below the surface of society, to judge precisely how far the change in the political system affects the peasant class. So complete was the distinction of classes formerly, that there was absolutely no middle or intermediate class whatever. Every man was a noble or a serf; now these things are so far dying away that the nobleman drops his title when he undertakes work that with us belongs to the middle classes, but he retains his feelings and habits. He looks back too, now and then, with longing recollection to the time when Hungary was in his view the freest country in Europe. At that time the noble paid no tax of any kind—he could command the services

of the peasant without thinking of payment—and he could live in his castle, or travel through the land, secure from the visit of the tax-gatherer, or any demand from his tradesmen. It is not easy to see now how this system worked. It is a thing altogether of the past, and the condition of society is rapidly approaching that common in other parts of Europe.

It will, perhaps, be seen from these remarks that *there is much in Hungary worth noticing, and something to be learnt with regard to the people as well as the country.* It is knowledge not easily attained, but, for that very reason, extremely interesting.

Once for all it may be remarked, that the towns and cities of Hungary are, for the most part, without interest. There are few Mediæval antiquities, few specimens of Gothic architecture, few fine buildings of any kind, no museum except at Pesth, and except some modern paintings, nothing even there that can appeal to or satisfy the lover of art. Of the picturesque there is abundance at every turn, but it is not attractive to the native artist. Almost all the art tastes of the Hungarians are classical, and all the towns look modern, except where a minaret or a dome reminds one of the time—not far distant—when a Turkish and Mahometan population contested this border land with the Christian.

Except, however, in this way, one is hardly reminded, in travelling through Hungary, how near Turkey is, and how very narrowly this part of Europe has escaped being Ottoman. Even within the recollection

of living persons, Turkish armies have overrun parts of modern Hungary, and redoubts and other works are seen on the hills in the Zsil valley, where the artillery of the Turks was planted on the occasion of one of their raids towards the close of the last century. Most of the Hungarian towns in the south have been too often and too recently burnt to the ground, to allow of fine architecture of the Mediæval date. This is, perhaps, the true reason why the streets of the towns have been made so wide and look so desolate, and it certainly explains and accounts for the fact that there are few roads, and these few not very good.

Of Roman antiquities and marks of the occupation of the ancient rulers of Europe, there is more to be seen, but little in any useful or interesting condition. That little is dug up out of the ground, few things built above it having withstood the changes of two thousand years. A few roads, the form of an old amphitheatre near a few towns, and some other indications, are all that can be made out.

But the country and the people of Hungary afford ample material for study. In these respects there is wonderful variety, and numerous points of interest. Let us hope that an account of one short trip may induce Englishmen to attempt many others, and do justice to this remote, unvisited, but by no means unfriendly land.

CHAPTER II.

Vienna to the Maros Valley.

THE district of Hungary we are about to describe is chiefly Transylvanian. It includes part of the important but little-known grand duchy of the Siebenbürgen, part of the adjacent district of the Bannat, a portion of the Military frontier, the Danube from the termination of the railway at Baziasch to the town of Gran, between Pesth and Presberg, and some of the easily-accessible and picturesque country on the left bank of the Danube, within about fifty miles from the river. It is a trip of considerable interest, and made very easily. Others equally interesting might be made with advantage, and some of these will be alluded to. Others less easy, and requiring more time, but also quite manageable, would carry the traveller into parts of eastern Hungary utterly unvisited, completely buried in the valleys of the higher Carpathians. The north-western part of the Carpathian chain has recently been crossed and briefly described by a traveller, but the north-eastern part is even more promising. The neighbourhood of Chemnitz and its mines have been most frequently visited. Wallachia may be easily entered. The towns of Siebenbürgen may be the objects of a pilgrimage. These are all points accessible to the traveller who has decided on

making eastern Hungary the object of a visit. Western Hungary offers attractions of a very different kind. We will not, however, waste time in discursive talk, but proceed to carry the reader with us to the starting-point.

A visit to the celebrated Ambras collection of antiquities in Vienna should be a preliminary measure in the case of a traveller bound for the Siebenbürgen. He will there see a rich collection of Roman remains obtained from this district, and not a few barbarous but magnificent works in solid gold also found there. For the Siebenbürgen is a district that has for a very long period yielded store of the most precious of all metals. The red gold and tellurium of Nagyag, the important auriferous veins of Oravicza, the sands of the Maros, the Berzava, and a multitude of other rivers with unfamiliar names, and the thick beds of gold-bearing gravel and conglomerate of the Zsil and other valleys, have been known and rifled from time immemorial. The gold obtained was sometimes made into links of a massive chain, sometimes worked into equally massive collars, armlets, signet rings and other personal ornaments, and occasionally into vases and other objects showing some artistic taste. Admirable examples of these are in the museum, and the learned and most attentive and polite director will point them out with pleasure to the inquirer.

Hardly less interesting are the coins and bronzes from the same neighbourhood. The country we are about to visit is classic ground. It was occupied for less than

two centuries by the Romans, but they have left an impression which no time will ever efface. They were succeeded by barbarous but highly-imitative races. The Turks have since swept over the land, and have tried, but in vain, to extirpate all mark. There it is still, and there it will remain. It is seen in the appearance of the people, heard in the most familiar words of their language, and may be traced in the fields where the bricks and pottery on the sites of their towns are every year turned up by the plough, though the amphitheatre is now a corn-field, and in the ancient streets the sheep and the cattle browse. In the museum, then, an idea may be formed of the antiquarian interest of the Siebenbürgen; and from the museum to the railway station, and thence to the point of bifurcation of the Theiss railway, will not take long to describe.

Railway journeys are useful, and we owe to the railway a debt of gratitude beyond all calculation, for we are thus enabled to place ourselves rapidly at the point from which we may desire to start to see a town or part of a country; but as enabling us to see the country they are worse than useless. Let us assume, then, that the traveller wishes to see a part of Hungary, and proceeds by rail to his destination. Passing by the city of Pesth, to which we shall come later, let us carry him to Czegled, about 220 miles from Vienna. A detention of an hour at this place, which will some day be a very important station, enables one to judge of the cities of the plain in this part of Hungary, for hitherto the rail has made little alteration.

The railway station is a low flat building, of some extent, but no beauty. Outside are half-a-dozen very rough carts, and a score of wild-looking human beings, either extremely dirty or extremely bronzed, or both, with long streaming black hair, sometimes lank, sometimes curled. The figure is concealed by white or rather cream-coloured garments made of undyed wool. These cover the body from head to foot, except that sometimes the head is covered with a cylindrical cap of black sheep-skin, wool outwards, and sometimes the legs are encased in boots greatly too large for the wearer. Except that the women are usually bareheaded there is little difference in their dress. Both sexes wear the sheep-skin jacket or cloak, of which the wool is put outside in summer and inside in winter. Both terminate downwards in loose white trowsers which look like short petticoats, or short petticoats that look like trowsers, and both wear precisely the same kind of enormous and very shabby boots, or else the feet are naked. These individuals hang about in true Arabic style, and might make one imagine one had landed unexpectedly in Algiers. Beyond the station is a large open space covered with a little grass, and indented with many wheel-tracks, but having no defined road. At a distance are seen a few low whitewashed buildings rising out of the plain, and a little stunted vegetation. All else is loose alluvial sand. There are no stones obtainable, and, therefore, there is no road. The waggons and carts proceeding to the station make the best of their way over the ground in dry weather

through clouds of dust, in rainy weather through quagmire.

A walk of a quarter of an hour brings one to the town. It consists of rows of small white houses and gardens, the rows parallel to each other, but a considerable distance apart, and thus forming a kind of wide street. Almost all the houses are low, oblong, barn-like buildings, with a very few small windows ; they are built with their gable ends towards the street, so that they have no look-out in that direction at all. The effect of dull monotony thus produced is almost worse than that of the windowless houses in Mahometan towns. Such then is Czegled, or as much of it as can be seen without losing the chance of getting on another stage by rail.

About eighteen miles from Czegled is Szolnok, where the railway again forks. One branch proceeds north-eastwards, and, after once more bifurcating to the east, is completed to Kaschau, a distance of 210 miles, nearly north from Szolnok ; another branch proceeds to the south-east towards Siebenbürgen, and terminates at present at Arad, a distance of about a hundred miles beyond the junction. This system of railways takes advantage of the great valley of the Theiss and its principal tributary the Maros. The valley of the Theiss is one of the largest of those that communicate with the Danube, and the river is itself navigable by steam-boats to a great distance. It is the chief channel by which the numerous streams coming from the Carpathians find their way to the sea, and one can easily

understand that the only outlet of the Danube being a narrow gorge of 200 yards in width near Orsova, where the depth of the river is nearly 180 feet, if this, by any convulsion of nature were closed, and the waters held back, the result must be the formation of a lake covering many scores of thousands of square miles, and entirely altering the face of Europe.

The hundred miles of rail from Szolnok to Arad present only the ordinary incidents belonging to a flat country, for no objects meet the eye more striking than a few herds of white cattle, provided with horns of the most portentous length, a few flocks of sheep, and one or two peasants with their sheep-skin caps. There is no unseemly hurry in the journey, for the train jogs on at the rate of some fifteen miles an hour, and stops at small road-side stations five or six miles apart. Little or no sign of towns or even of single houses is seen, but still travellers are found, and the railway already makes a fair return for the capital invested, though quite in its infancy, and running only two trains each way *per diem*.

The present terminus of the railway in this direction is at Arad, an important town of 30,000 inhabitants, pleasantly situated in the level ground close to the river Maros, about forty miles above its junction with the Theiss.

At first sight there seems nothing in Arad beyond the enormously disproportioned width of its roads to distinguish it from a flourishing town in any other part of Europe. In this respect, however, it even

surpasses Washington, "the city of magnificent distances." A straggling road conducts from the railway into the town. This road consists of one wide paved track, to be used in case of need when nothing else is safe. There is a sandy wilderness adjacent, wide enough for half-a-dozen carriages to roll along side by side in fine weather, and becoming a treacherous morass after rain. A somewhat harder but unpaved path extends between this morass and the houses. Opposite neighbours in this part of the town must be as completely separated from one another during many weeks of the year as if there were a wide stream instead of a road to cross.

Within the town, Arad is bright, clean, well-built, and lively, but all the streets are disproportionately wide. The buildings are new, and the churches unworthy of notice, but though neither picturesque nor handsome, there is a striking appearance of cleanliness and comfort that gives a favourable impression. The hotel accommodation is good, and, as is usual in Hungary, the cuisine and cellar are beyond the average of small towns in Germany. The existence of such a town in such a place was a matter of considerable interest to me, and shows a very rapid advance consequent on the establishment of the railroad.

From Arad into the Siebenbürgen there is daily communication by a schnell-post, proceeding at the established rate of one German mile an hour. Twenty hours of rumbling at this pace conveyed me to the district I was about to examine.

For the first ten miles the road crosses part of the

vast plains of the Danube and Theiss, that great open flat that has been well named the European pampas. It is not always a dead level, but the undulations are so small compared with the extent of ground that when seen from a distance they die away and are hardly recognized. There is hardly a limit to the amount of produce obtainable from these alluvial lands.

The true hills rise at first quite abruptly from the plain, and are recognized by the geological eye as being absolutely unconnected with the undulations above spoken of. They are, indeed, usually results of ancient volcanic disturbance, and are not unlike those beautiful seven sisters (the well-known Siebengebirge) rising from the banks of the Rhine between Bonn and Coblenz. The road, as it approaches the hills, seems to terminate abruptly, and a steep ascent shows itself on a long line to right and left; but the Maros, a fine, though rather unmanageable, stream, has cut a wide valley, and flows tranquilly enough at this point, leaving ample space along its banks for cultivated fields as well as a road.

After winding at the foot of the high ground for a few miles, we enter amongst the hills, and signs of change soon appear.

A valley three or four miles wide, richly cultivated with corn, well watered by the river, and covered with pretty white villages, first succeeds the somewhat blank monotony of the great plains adjacent. The hills rise rapidly on each side, and are either clothed with vines, or towards the top present an unbroken

mass of forest, for the most part oak. After about fifteen miles of this country, there is a broad opening, presenting a scene singularly rich, lovely, and cultivated, through which the road winds easily and quietly along for some further distance. Then, for a time, the river channel is interrupted by precipitous rocks, and the valley becomes more shut in, being darkened by forests of oak, much of the wood in a state of nature.

The upper part of the Maros is exceedingly wild and beautiful, but it is a wide river, and the quantity of water in it varies much with the season, and affects considerably the picturesque result. The river can hardly be regarded as navigable, though, probably, all the lower part admits of easy reduction to a navigable state. It is, however, quite capable of being traversed by a railroad for a considerable distance. It takes its rise and receives two important tributaries from that part of the Carpathians separating Hungary from Moldavia. Like many of the other streams of this part of Europe, it collects the waters of a large area, and conveys them out of a closed district by deep fissures or by gorges broken through the main chain of the mountains.

The cultivation of the Maros valley is by no means neglected. The ground is covered with corn crops, or else left in grass on the lower lands; while the hill sides are clothed with vines for some height, and then crowned with oak, beech, and other wood. Very large quantities of Indian corn are grown in these parts of Hungary. Judging from specimens in the Museum

at Pesta, it would be worth while to visit the country in autumn to see the gigantic stalks of this plant and of the sugar grass (*Sorgho*) also grown in the plains. They would seem to rival the growth in America, where in some fields a tall man riding on a tall horse would be entirely lost and concealed by the corn.

Much of my journey from Arad was performed by night. Besides numerous villages, some small towns were passed, of which Dobra is the most important, and as the days were very long, and the broad moonlight rendered the country visible, we did not lose much of the scenery. Towards the early morning we entered the narrower part of the valley. The volume of the stream was still large, and there was ample space for the road on either bank. We crossed in a ferry-boat, well enough constructed to carry the diligence, and the road then continued on the south side of the stream into the heart of the Siebenbürgen.

Dobra is a decent town, with its two churches close together, staring at each other, but each so ugly that there can be no rivalry. One is appropriated to the Greek and the other to the Roman Church, but the difference in appearance is as small as the nature of the mummeries carried on in the interior. The people are all Hungarians, and seem prosperous. The houses are well built, and the general appearance favourable. It is almost the first of the Siebenbürgen towns, and from this point the River Maros may be considered to separate the Hungarian from the Wallachian popula-

tion. The actual frontier of Wallachia is nearly a hundred miles further south, although we soon begin to see the customs and costumes of Hungary displaced.

Near Dobra there is a good deal of rocky ground, and a large quantity of a peculiar kind of conglomerate crops out on the river-bank. Beyond the town the valley opens again, and at Lesnek is altogether park-like, the river running through a wide, undulating plain between somewhat lofty and very richly-wooded hills on each side. This continues for some distance, and nearly as far as Deva. Some small ironworks are passed on the road, and the neighbourhood is not without a certain amount of industry.

Towards noon we arrived at Deva, our present destination, and though somewhat out of the way, it is by no means an unimportant place.

The approach to Deva is marked by a change in the character of the scenery. The valley, always picturesque, closes in, and near the town is an isolated rock, on whose summit are the ruins of a fortress, whose origin common report attributes to the Romans. No doubt it has been a strong place from time immemorial, but it has for some time been in a state of decay, and at the revolution in 1848 what little remained was blown up. It is a picturesque ruin, and, being in a country where ruins are not often picturesque, is perhaps the more appreciated.

Deva itself is a large town, well situated, and neatly built. There is good accommodation at the inn, and

an air of cheerfulness about the people which was very pleasant to see. The snowy Carpathians are now in sight, and the view, both to east and west, is singularly beautiful.

Mr. Paget in his "Hungary and Transylvania," an excellent book, although out of date for those things that admit of change, describes enthusiastically the valley of the Maros at and near Deva, and its downward course thence to the great open plains of the Theiss. He says: "The first part towards the borders of Hungary is rich, well wooded, and occasionally ornamented with pretty country houses. At Dobra the road leaves it." The road here spoken of is that to Temeswar. The road from Adra continues along the valley, and has already been described. It was not visited by Mr. Paget, but is hardly less beautiful.

From Deva a very interesting excursion may be made to the celebrated gold mines of Nagy-Ag (Nagyag) about ten miles from the town. But although the distance is short, the roads are not tempting. Very beautiful specimens of several rare minerals have been obtained from Nagyag, and at this place also tellurium, a somewhat rare metal, is found. It is generally associated with gold, and the mineralogical interest connected with it is very considerable.

The gold of Nagyag is not obtained from washings, but from well-marked veins. They have long been worked, and the produce of the mines is still considerable.

North of Deva the mountains are not very lofty, but

they are difficult to cross, and the roads are very bad. To the east the road passes on towards the curious and interesting Saxon lands of Transylvania,* and southwards there is a valley of considerable interest affording communication across two low passes with Wallachia.

The country south of the Maros is chiefly inhabited by Wallachians, probably a mixed race, chiefly derived from the ancient Dacians, with a large admixture from subsequent conquering nations, of whom the Romans were in all respects the chief. There is very little of the true Hungarian element. Before, however, passing on to the account of these valleys and their inhabitants, it will be worth while to say a few words concerning the curious towns and population of the Siebenbürgen, and explain the mixture of races that prevails in this part of Europe, where the Slave, the German, the Magyar, the Italian of a very early period, and some races yet earlier and wilder than any of these, are now curiously balanced, and are likely to be very differently affected by the grand march of civilization rapidly modifying Eastern Europe.

It is now seven centuries since one of the ruling princes of Hungary determined to induce German colonists to people and cultivate the wastes of Transylvania. They were induced to emigrate by many privileges granted to them, and they brought their own laws and institutions. None of the privileges of the nobles interfered with them. They cultivated their land

* So called in Hungary. The population of these districts is mixed German.

in their own fashion, and what was once a desert soon became a cultivated and fertile district. The cities of the Siebenbürgen, Kronstadt, Hermannstadt, Elizabethstadt, Klausenburg, and a number of others, remain to this day, proofs of the wisdom of the measure thus inaugurated. The descendants of these Germans will probably long remain there, buried among a people with no German sympathies, but the homes of an industrious, steady, frugal, and patient race, the best-lodged, the best-clothed, and the best-instructed peasant and middle-class population in that part of the Continent.

The people thus settled, although called Saxons, were chiefly from the Lower Rhine, and were rather Dutch than North German. The men wear woolly caps, and are generally seen mounted on the lively little horses of the country. The women are by no means remarkable for good looks, and have a peculiar method of wearing the hair, by which they are easily recognized. Their long tresses are plaited into a single tail, collected at the forehead, and hanging down the right cheek.

There are now nine principal cities or towns, instead of seven ; but the name of the district is not likely to be altered.

Not having penetrated this part of Transylvania myself, I can only recommend it to the English traveller as being, according to all accounts of Hungarians and Germans, not only well worth visiting, but containing all that the tourist can require. It is accessible ; there is fair accommodation ; the people

are hospitable, pleasant, and can make themselves understood by and understand any one who speaks the German language. The cities contain many points of great interest, even including mediæval ruins, and the proximity to Turkey seems to have had the effect of improving rather than deteriorating the national character.

By following the course of the Maros these German settlements are soon reached. Leaving the Maros to the north, and taking the small but not uninteresting feeder called the Strehl, we come into a country by no means less interesting, though interesting in a different way.

CHAPTER III.

Deva to the Zsil Valley.—The Valley of the Strehl, and the Town of Hunyad.

IN two comfortable long covered carts, seated in wicker arm-chairs (each holding two persons), which were suspended by leathers from the sides of the carts: the luggage at the back of the cart, kept in its place by a quantity of hay intended as the food for the horses when nothing else could be got:—our party thus arranged started from Deva on an expedition southwards. Three gallant little Hungarian horses were harnessed in primitive style to each cart, and after mending sundry breakages, sending back more than once for missing articles, and making two or three other false starts, we galloped off at full speed over the rough road with small respect to our own safety, or that of any chance animal or person in the way. Our party included five persons besides the drivers, and we had at first only to reach the town of Vaida.Hunyad, sometimes called Hunyad (the word Vaida meaning simply governor), where we were to dine. There were not many incidents on the road. The first part of it was the same as that travelled by the diligence to Hermannstadt, and afterwards we entered the cross

road to Hunyad, and arrived at that town after about three hours' drive.

Hunyadi János, the Governor of Hungary during an important period of European history, and to whom Europe owes its emancipation from Moslem sway, was certainly one of the greatest men, not only of his day, but his century. Born of humble parentage on the mother's side—his mother was a peasant of Szonakos, a small village in the valley of Hátzeg—he was acknowledged to be the son of Sigismund, King of Hungary, in whose reign the Turks first crossed the boundaries of Hungary Proper, after establishing themselves in the Transylvanian valley. At a very early age Hunyad gained a series of glorious victories over the enemies of his country, following them into Wallachia, and driving them across the Danube into Bulgaria, even obtaining the fortresses of Servia and Bosnia. By an act of treachery not uncommon during the middle ages, when no faith was kept with heretics, he was induced to violate the terms of a treaty made with the Turks, and thus arose a second war, in which the tables were for a time completely turned; but shortly before his death he redeemed his character, and, after a battle lasting three days, he completely routed the enemy and took Belgrad. Being thus effectually driven back at a critical period, and the strength of Christian Europe having time to exert itself, the Moslems never afterwards recovered the lost ground, and the whole of Hungary and Central Europe has since been free.

The river Strehl runs in a wide, variable, and winding stream through Hunyad, and is crossed by a few wooden bridges. Two or three small tributaries come in close to the town. Without being large, it occupies much ground, and there is a lively air about the place, the houses looking clean and comfortable. As we were hospitably received in the house of one of the gentlemen of our party, and *feted* by his most amiable and charming wife, I had no means of testing the qualities of the inn, but I certainly have been in many larger towns where the prospect of accommodation was much inferior to that of Hunyad.

There are several churches in the town, but the only very remarkable building is the castle, which is nobly situated on a precipitous rock of crystalline limestone, jutting forward as a promontory, and standing almost detached. Two small streams meet the Strehl at this point, and three sides of the promontory are thus surrounded with water; the fourth is quite inaccessible. Another rock rises on the opposite side of one of the little streams, and from the top of this second rock, also quite isolated, a bridge has been built which forms the only means of access to the castle. The bridge is long, and of a great height above the water. A road passes along the banks of the stream, also under the bridge. Only a part of the castle was built by the Governor Hunyad, the remainder being of later date. The wall and towers on the right, and the hall, or Ritter Saal, which is also there, are very fine. The

tower on the left is very large, but is not open, and is said to be solid throughout. In that case it is probably a projecting needle of rock, simply inclosed, and masked by masonry. The exterior of this large tower is painted in dark red and white, in a curious unmeaning pattern, giving a very good effect at a distance, although when nearly approached the details are ugly. Such painted castles were not uncommon at one period in Hungary, but it is believed that Hunyad is the only one still remaining. Churches, however, are still ornamented in this manner, and without much taste, and some private houses are seen similarly disfigured in the old Saxon towns of the Siebenbürgen. The work does not appear to be done in fresco, but in common oil colours.

The chapel in the castle is plain, poor, and uninteresting. The other buildings are mostly destroyed, either by a fire which occurred a few years ago, or by subsequent neglect; and the fine stone work of the Gothic portion of the building, the great hall, the rooms above, and the beautiful corridor outside the hall, are rapidly falling to decay, and are already in a very dangerous state. The castle belongs to Government, and before the fire it was made use of for local purposes. Since then there has been no attempt at keeping it together. It would appear, from an account of the palace given by Mr. Paget, before the fire had taken place, that it was then a very charming residence, and a gentleman who accompanied me on my visit, and who was an *employé* under Government before

the revolution, and had lived in the castle, took me over the various ruins with great interest, and spoke of it as in his time perfectly fit for occupation.

Outside the walls are two gardens, at different levels, with several charming terraces, each with walks and seats ; all, alas ! now overgrown with weeds, and hardly approachable. From the gardens and towers superb views are obtained of the surrounding mountains. The high peaks of the Carpathian chain, seen towards the east, sweep round in a graceful curve to meet the loftier mountains in the south. Much nearer are the hills of Nagyag, with their celebrated gold and tellurium mines, and the ground around is extremely broken and picturesque.

Two or three very pretty valleys open out of the Strechl near Hunyad. They are picturesque, richly wooded, where there is room for a tree, and with a brawling stream sometimes forcing its way through a narrow cleft. The water is sometimes utilized, being made to turn small overshot wheels belonging to the hammer-works and iron-mills that abound in the neighbourhood. The little stream not far off crosses one of those gigantic deposits of iron ore that look as if meant to supply a much more active people than the modern Hungarians. For a couple of hundred yards the road is black with iron ore recently rolled down from above, or with the slag and ash of old furnaces built here centuries ago, and now only indicated by these fragments. We are here in an old country, and one whose resources

were perhaps more cultivated in former times than they now are. Here, at any rate, the old Dacians forged the spears with which they endeavoured to keep the Romans from forcing the passes and entering the Siebenbürgen. Here, in after times, the Romans, when they had made good their footing, smelted the ores and hammered the metal which they so well knew how to use in keeping down troublesome nationalities. The quantity of slag by the roadside, and the magnitude of the trenches from which ore has been dug on the hills, contrast strangely with the present neglect. The magnitude of the timber grown on the site of the old works affords silent but strong proof of the time that has elapsed, and explain the deep cuts in the hill-side made by the action of centuries of summer rain and winter frost, and partly obscuring the old trenches dug by the miner.

A charming walk through the forest may be found, but only in the company of one who knows the country well, from the place where are all these indications of iron industry to another little valley, also provided with its little mills and hammer-works. The distance, as calculated from the map, would seem very small, and from the second valley to another beyond it one would also fancy to be a very easy half-hour's walk. The ridges between these valleys, however, if narrow are very sharp. Some cannot be mounted at all except by taking advantage of ravines worn by water, and by climbing almost vertically. Elsewhere a long *détour* is necessary to conduct one to the top. Hours are

spent in thus crossing a ridge a few hundred yards wide.

All these ridges are covered with thick and very beautiful wood, and, without a guide, they are not to be recommended.

From the summit of the first one looks down into a Swiss valley with chalets and little wooden huts; a few wild-looking people and another brawling stream, like that just passed, giving life to the landscape.

I hardly remember to have seen instances of that peculiar and picturesque ridge structure, sometimes called a "hog's back," more numerous, lofty, and narrow, than here. On one of the ridges there is a straight path some miles long, entirely through forest, and at almost every point of the walk you may look down on a valley at your feet ; on each side the width at the bottom of the ridge seeming to be not much wider at the bottom than the top. These ridges are understood by the geologist. They are split shreds of a rock of hard crystalline limestone, cracked while crystallizing, the crack widened when brought up to the earth's surface, and the fissure thus formed has been enlarged to become a valley by the water that has found its way through them. The iron ore makes its appearance where this limestone comes in contact with an old slaty rock near at hand, and the fingers of limestone stretch away from this contact.

All this part of the country is inhabited. It is true there are no villages to be seen, but the huts of the people are often isolated, and resemble ant-hills

in their form—they are not much larger, indeed, than the ant-hills common in the tropics. They are altogether so poor and so low, that looking from a distance one can hardly recognize them, even when pointed out. With great attention one may make out sometimes a little wooden cross among the trees; this generally indicates a church, but the church is hardly of greater size, and is not better built or better furnished, than the hut, and often has nothing to distinguish it. It is built of wood, and roofed with small split shingles, not much larger than wide laths.

From Hunyad to Hátzeg, the road avoids the plain of the Strehl (somewhat unnecessarily as it would seem), and crosses a succession of low hills of little interest, and valleys with small but rapid and mischievous streams of water. Part of the road, however, is interesting, as from time to time we rise to the ridge of some hill, and see spread out before us the range of the Southern Carpathians, covered with snow till July, and always bold and picturesque. The higher peaks of these mountains are little known, and have failed hitherto to attract either the members of the Alpine Club or the Vacation Tourists.* But they are not undeserving of notice. They are unusually bold, and are clothed with forest to a great height, and the snow covers their upper peaks to an extent which is remarkable, considering their not very lofty elevation. The peaks are few, and some of them are not easy of access.

* One of the latter—a lady—has recently ventured across the Northern Carpathians, and has recorded her experience in a separate volume, already referred to in these pages.

These mountains are seen at intervals as we rise upon the successive ridges that separate the valleys of the Zsil and Hátzeg from that of the Strehl, and each time, as we approach more nearly, their outline is more distinct. The intervening valleys become also wilder, more broken, and more interesting, but less cultivated. The rain has worn very deep ravines in the soft alluvial or diluvial rock in the valleys, and portions which are constantly falling widen the ravines, but make them almost inaccessible. The mountains now also begin to close in, and the whole country gradually assumes a more Alpine character. The valley of Hátzeg itself is wide, long, and open. It is a separate valley, opening from the west into the Strehl valley; commencing at the foot of Retgezat, it terminates near the town of Hátzeg.

The physical geography of this part of the Carpathian chain is well seen in the valley of the Strehl and of the small tributary entering near Hátzeg. The chief mountain axis ranges east and west at some distance to the south. It culminates at the mountain called Retgezat (something more than 8000 English feet above the sea), closing up one end of the Zsil valley, and by Barang, little inferior in height, proudly standing up as a barrier at the other end. From Retgezat, a comparatively low spur of granite and other crystalline rock, gradually sinking to about 1500 feet, ranges a little north of east, nearly parallel to the axis of the Zsil valley, while the main chain, at least 6000 feet high, passes a little south of east, separating the

Siebenbürgen from Wallachia, and forming the southern boundary of the Zsil valley.

The low chain, however, is in this case the watershed, the main chain being split asunder at the Vulkan pass by a cleft of nearly 4000 feet, allowing free passage to the Zsil river, which is fed by a number of small streamlets in a singular east and west valley of tertiary rocks, and several smaller streams from the north and east. The main chain of the Carpathians turns shortly towards the north, with an elevation of from 5000 to 6000 feet, increasing to above 8000 feet.

The result of this peculiar configuration is seen in a number of small valleys running east and west, parallel to the mountain axis. These are broken across at right angles, and the streams issuing from them also run north or south according to their position with regard to the great cross fracture. The Hátzeg stream, a branch of the Strehl, is the first of these. After entering the Strehl, it opens northwards into the Maros valley. The Zsil valley comes next, but it runs southwards into the Danube. The head waters of these two streams are only separated by a low and apparently unimportant ridge, extremely narrow, and quite capable of being traversed by a railway.

The branch of the valley of the Strehl coming in at Hátzeg, is called the valley of Hátzeg; it will be referred to in another chapter. The valley of the Strehl itself, above Hátzeg, is open and cultivated. There are several villages in it, but none of any size.

Some of them are extremely neat, and contain groups of clean-looking comfortable houses; others are mere collections of the most unsightly hovels. One in particular I noticed, in which the houses could only be compared to a parcel of mud heaps thrown indiscriminately on the ground. Generally each house has its garden, but the towns look better at a little distance than when closely approached.

The river Strehl in this part of its course occupies a narrow bed in a bottom half a mile wide or more, some 20 or 30 feet below the general level of the valley. There are thus natural terraces on each side of the river above the highest level of the water, preventing inundation. No doubt after heavy rains the quantity of water coming along through a valley, inclosed as this is, and communicating by many side valleys with the higher mountains, must sometimes be very great, and render travelling dangerous; but the present bed of the stream cannot diverge far from its course without undermining its banks. The watercourses, however, all bear marks of violent action from time to time. In one place I observed the support of a bridge and half the road torn away. In another, the road is narrowed to half its width, and a precipice formed on one side open to the brawling flood below. In other places great efforts had been made with partial success to prevent damage. All the mischief, however, seemed limited to the vicinity of the stream; and the old road constructed by Trajan in the days of Roman grandeur, at no great distance, is un-

touched. The finger of old Rome is not uncommon in these valleys, and one is quite prepared to accept the tradition that any work involving the outlay of time and labour was theirs. The road in question, however, is a continuation of that entering Siebenbürgen from the west by the pass of the Iron Gate, and was constructed by Trajan shortly after the first occupation of the province and the final defeat of Decebalus.

This road has not only been one of importance in ancient times, but is still a useful work.

In the open part of the Strehl valley, as indeed in most of the wilder and less-inhabited districts, the gypsies take up their temporary abode, and are said to be tolerably numerous. They are easily recognized; their wild picturesque look, their lank black hair, bright eyes, dark skin, and air of mixed intelligence, roguery, and savage waywardness, distinguish them readily from any of the other populations even when they are seen alone. Riding along we frequently crossed their path. One of the first of the larger encampments I had seen in Hungary was situated in the open country, near the last village of the Strehl valley, where there was little other population. It is not easy to describe by the pen a scene so opposite to anything one is accustomed to see in Europe. The pencil of a good artist or a photographer might have given valuable hints, but mere verbal description is tame. The reader may, however, picture to himself the encampment. It consisted of a number of very imperfect canvas

sheds, each formed of three sticks, placed so as to form a triangle, and partly covered with a few filthy rags stretched across, barely held together in such a way as to keep off the rays of the sun, but hardly affording any defence against the pelting of the rain. Under these, which were all quite open in front, were a few women engaged in some culinary concoction, very sparingly clothed in rags even less serviceable than those forming the tent; naked children of all ages were running about; men, some clothed in a worn-out sheep-skin coat with only the skin left (the wool long since gone), some with small fragments only of white woollen coats, some with sheep-skin caps and very shabby boots, and little else, were lying quite idle in the sun. A few miserable donkeys and mules feeding on the roadside completed the establishment. Not a particle of furniture of any kind was to be seen, not a vestige of any better condition, or of any wish or intention to work,—the children did not even beg.

The gypsies are well known in this part of Europe, nor is their character different from that borne by them elsewhere. They are good workers in metal, but better thieves. In the winter they go about in the villages performing such tinkering as is there required. They seem, indeed, to take to working in metal as their one industry, and are clever enough to do anything required in that capacity, but they will do nothing else. As soon as spring comes they are off to the open country, where they encamp, and obtain what they can in a wild way, avoiding work

as much as possible, and merely existing. In summer they sometimes occupy themselves in the lazy work of gold-washing. There are few of the rivers of Transylvania that do not yield some gold, and many are rich in this precious metal, so that in this way they gain a precarious and speculative living, suitable to their roving tastes and idle habits.

Still higher up the valley the country alters but little. It is shut in on the side towards the east, the *hills not only rising to a great height, but being very precipitous*; but to the west it remains open. Some charming valleys are said to exist in this neighbourhood, running up to the east and north into inaccessible gorges among rich forests, and watered by small bubbling streams. Very few villages are seen hereabouts, but there are some, and, as elsewhere, they vary much in appearance; one or two being clean, pretty, with well-built houses inclosed in cultivated gardens, and others so miserable and dirty that they would be considered unfit, in better-cared-for districts, even for the worst-regulated pigstyes of the poorest families.

Some of the geological features of this part of the country are worthy of a brief notice. Low hills of schist and slaty rocks are covered with rounded water-worn pebbles at a height of several yards above the highest level of the stream. Very considerable piles of such modern gravel are not uncommon, and they contrast singularly with the low flat alluvial bottom in which the river runs, and in which there are few such pebbles, but many angular blocks. It is quite

clear that at no distant period—geologically speaking—this whole valley was exposed to the influence of moving currents of water, very different from and much more powerful than those obtainable by any possible increase of the present river. There has been a change not only of local level, but of the circumstances under which water acted on the surface. There has been a time when the sea or the disturbed waters of a large lake acted on these lands, and rounded the pebbles we see. The upper valley of the Strehl thus reads us an important geological lesson.

The churches of this part of the country have been already alluded to. They are extremely small, wonderfully simple in their structure, and would be unrecognizable by the stranger, but for the existence of a ludicrously small wooden spire rising some ten feet above an abortive attempt at a tower. The whole construction is of thin small fragments of split wood. There is no attempt at ornament of any kind.

After passing through a country cultivated and covered with villages such as have been described, and always open, we reach at length the village of Krivadia, near the point where the two ways across the mountains to the Zsil valley diverge. One of these roads, that to the left, or south-east, is a bridle path, and is considerably longer than the other, but at a much lower elevation, and enters the eastern extremity of the valley. The other, to the south-west, is a cart road, perfectly passable in fine weather, and conducting to the middle of the valley opposite the town of Vulkan, and the high road to Wallachia across the Vulkan pass.

The singular barrier that here rises up between the valley of the Strehl and that of the Zsil is of no great elevation. Estimated by the aneroid barometer I found that from the village of Krivadia to the top of the bridle-path is a difference of level of 748 feet, and from the top of the pass down to the river Zsil on the other side is 392 feet. The cart road is much higher, being 1329 feet above the Strehl at Rivadia, and 924 above the Zsil at Vulkan. The heights above the sea were not ascertained, but the rise from Hátzeg to Krivadia is about 629 feet, and there is no fall of importance thence to the Maros, which flows at a good pace, but not rapidly, to the Theiss.

At Krivadia, the river, which does not bring a very large body of water from the mountains, is seen issuing through an extremely narrow and inaccessible cleft in limestone rock. The scenery is here wild and grand, and the valley appears suddenly and effectually closed. On a detached hill of limestone near the river is a round watch-tower of some antiquity, and the cliffs rise vertically on one side clothed with wood to a considerable height, and then slope away, lost in thick forest, to the mountain behind. The valley is narrow. On the other side the rise is less precipitous, but not very accessible.

We left the carts at this point of our journey, and were to proceed on horseback. When we reached the village, however, the weather, which had long threatened, became decidedly bad, and extremely severe thunder storms succeeded each other with rapidity, torrents of rain rendering the road almost impassable. On entering

the courtyard of a small but decent house, where our horses were waiting for us, we found about a score of the wildest and roughest mountain ponies that need be seen tied up in a long line against a low stone wall, feeding on a little exceedingly rotten-looking hay thrown on the muddy ground at their feet. They were all saddled after the fashion of the country, and ready for departure, and no one seemed to imagine that there might be some discomfort and other inconvenience in sitting for hours on these soaked cloths while crossing the mountains in torrents of rain. With considerable difficulty I succeeded in postponing our departure at first for a few hours, and afterwards till next morning, and managed to get the cloths taken off, and put to dry on a small stove in the house. Here, however, was another difficulty, as only one was allowed to bake at a time, lest these valuable properties should become mixed. Meanwhile the horses were left without other food than the rest of the wet hay, and there they patiently stood tied up in the rain against the stone wall until we wanted them. No shelter for them seemed to be thought of.

Our own accommodation in the house, though the best that the place afforded, and given up to us in the most hospitable way by the owners, (who slept on the ground in a sort of kitchen,) was not very excellent. We had one room, and that a very small one, and certain provisions we had brought with us. After such a supper as circumstances admitted, a little loose hay was procured and spread on the ground. There was

one bed densely inhabited by fleas, which was awarded to me as the stranger; one sofa, which was allotted to a civil engineer of our party, who was in the next degree a stranger; and the three others of our party arranged themselves on the hay. Some of them certainly slept, but all were fiercely attacked by the small enemies, who were numerous and active enough to disregard circumstances, and take full advantage of the accident that had delivered up to them so rich a prey.

Next morning, at daybreak, we were up and away, and had a very pleasant journey across the pass, which presented nothing of special interest. The first part of the road is a steady ascent for a couple of hours through a cultivated and thinly-wooded district with few houses. The top of the pass is easily reached, and is a wide, flat track of grassy moorland, presenting no particular features. From this point the descent to the other side is even and gradual.

Towards 9 o'clock we reached the valley on the other side, and passed a magnificent mass of broken limestone, penetrated in many directions by large caverns. Through some of these caverns a stream of water of considerable volume, too deep to be forded safely by horses, makes its way. In one place the river is seen within the cavern coming out from one low gloomy arch, crossing a comparatively open space, and then burying itself again in the earth. At another place the water issues from the earth under a lofty limestone cliff, and, already a large stream, rushes along through the fields as if rejoicing at its recently-found

liberty. The whole district is pierced, and the caverns are some of them extremely large. In one place it is possible to ride for a quarter of an hour through a natural tunnel in the rock, but huge masses are occasionally falling in from the roof, and altering the form and direction of the channel.

One of these caverns is rather a favourite spot for excursions, and people come from towns at a very considerable distance to pic-nic there. There is a noble entry by a natural arch, leading into a vast hall or corridor 100 yards long, 60 or 80 feet wide, and at least 20 feet high; at the end of this is a river, over which one can pass into the recesses of the cavern by a natural bridge of rock. After traversing the passages for some time, the water is again reached, and there is evidently open communication with a very extensive series of fissures.

These limestone rocks are soon passed, and we enter an open and beautiful park-like country, leading to the valley of the Hungarian Zsil, a brawling stream rushing down from a somewhat extensive system of mountain valleys to the north-east. Few things are more interesting than the mode in which the mountains rise and lose themselves in the complicated chain extending between this part of the country and the higher Carpathians. A number of small villages are to be found, and these villages are peopled with a mixed Wallachian race, industrious enough, and generally seen in the fields tending their cattle or cultivating their fields. They are highly picturesque in appearance and cos-

tune, and seem inclined to be friendly, but there are no ready means of communication, their language being distinct from either German or Hungarian, and few of them understanding any other than their own dialect. Their cattle are not less picturesque than themselves. The oxen are almost always cream-white, with elegantly-curved horns of most portentous length. The horses are small and rough, but very capable of work, and generally good-tempered. Of their extreme hardiness we had ample experience, as the animals we took with us were worked every day all day long, and had no other food than that which they could pick up in the open country.

CHAPTER IV.

The Valley of the Zsil.—Vulkan and the Vulkan Pass.—The Two Rivers, and their Passage through the Mountains.—The Gold-field and the Coal-field.—The Side Valleys of the Zsil.

A CHARMING and interesting valley—or, rather, system of valleys—is this of the Zsil. It is composed of two entirely distinct branches; one coming in from the north, from a country long settled as part of Hungary, and called the Hungarian Zsil; the other coming from the west, through a border-land between Wallachia and Hungary, often in the possession of Turkey, and called the Wallachian Zsil. The two streams are nearly of the same magnitude; and after meeting at the south-eastern extremity of a triangular mountain basin, they flow together through a very narrow, romantic, and almost inaccessible mountain gorge, into Wallachia, running in an almost straight line southwards, into the Danube below Kraiova. The Zsil is the least important of two streams (the Alt, or Aluta, being the other) that traverse the Southern Carpathians, both streams running along valleys which cross the mountain chain at right angles. Although the smaller stream, the Zsil is by no means inconsiderable even when it leaves Hungary; and it is a large river when it reaches the plains of Wallachia.

The name *Zsil* is a modification of the Latin word *Julia*, and its meaning, derived from the Roman empress of that name, is easily understood. It is pronounced *Jil*. Although, however, this stream carries us back to the period of the Roman empire for its name, it is sufficient to look to a time very much nearer our own to find matter of extreme interest in reference to it. Less than a century has elapsed since the Turks, marching up the *Zsil*, crossed the Wallachian frontier, and encamped in this valley. But the crescent then waved over these Christian lands for the last time. The Turks entered the valley by the *Vulkan* Pass and established themselves on the hills on the north side. The earth-works surrounding this last Turkish camp still remain, and the corn waves over the deserted redoubts where the Moslem—then as Eastern in his dress and manners as he still is in feeling—held a prominent place among the European Powers, and threatened to overthrow the Austrian empire.

No great battle was at that time fought in the neighbourhood, nor is there any record of the injury done. The residence of a hostile army is, however, an evil too serious to be readily forgotten; and the very modern air observable in all the buildings, speaks plainly enough as to the absence of a long-settled and secure population.

But, besides the earth-works, there are other indications of the vicinity of Turkey. At the foot of the *Vulkan* Pass, and near the village of *Vulkan*, but on the other side of the river, is a miserable pile of

buildings, once the lazaretto of this neighbourhood. Here the unfortunate travellers who may have left their homes, in some Wallachian town, in perfect health—who may never have even heard of a pestilence raging in Turkey—were closely imprisoned and almost poisoned for a fortnight or three weeks, or sometimes more, according to circumstances; exposed to danger, if danger existed, from their associates much more than from any predisposing cause; and only set free when they were more likely to die of typhus than of any other form of contagious malady.

The quarantine regulations, however, still remain, and in the event of any serious outbreak of the plague in the east of Europe, these melancholy huts would, perhaps, once more be called into use. Unhappy, indeed, would be the fate of the travellers thus condemned, although the mountain air might prove a potent destroyer even of the pestilential vapours bred in Eastern plains and swamps. I confess I could not pass these huts without a shudder, caused, perhaps, as much from my own personal experience in a lazaretto, as from any mere sympathetic pity for my neighbours.

The Zsil Valley contains several villages, distributed chiefly near the stream, both in the Hungarian and Wallachian branches. The greater part of the valley is admirably seen from the high ground on the north side; and few scenes of the kind are more striking. Barang in the east, and Retgezat in the west, shut in the Wallachian stream, and are con-

nected by a glorious line of intermediate mountains, both north and south of the river. Both the high mountains were very thickly covered with snow in May, and are said to retain their white caps till August. They are, indeed, noble mountains, and deserve more attention from tourists than they have ever received.

Vulkan is the capital of the Zsil Valley. When, why, or by whom it was named, I have not been able, by much careful inquiry, to learn. It is certainly not volcanic, for all the rocks in the neighbourhood are quiet conglomerates, sandstones, and clays; and although behind it rise lofty mountains, these are, at first, of slaty material, and, further off, granitic. Neither can it be connected with iron; for the great blacksmith-god of the Latins must have gone so far for his raw material, that he would hardly have established himself here in consequence of any natural advantages of that kind. Suffice it, then, to say, that the name is so, and that the village is very much more decent than any one would expect in such a locality. It is a frontier village placed at the foot of the Vulkan Pass leading into Wallachia, and is the head-quarters of official life in the district.

There is a wild enough country among the vast virgin forests behind the Zsil. Not quite untrodden, indeed; for in old times the Romans, and, within the recollection of living persons, the Turks, have poured men and implements of war across, and have strengthened themselves in fortifications that look now as fresh

as if they had been constructed not ten years ago. Many are the marks of Turkish occupation in all the adjacent district. On the hill opposite Vulkan, near the old lazaretto, of which mention has already been made, and not far from the redoubts, are some of their villages. Though the neighbourhood is old, however, and cultivation was by no means commenced in modern times, there is hardly a house or shed of any kind that dates back half a century. Whether we regard this as a proof of the destruction of every existing thing by the invading army, or as evidence of the valley being at that time deserted and only since peopled, certain it is that none of the houses and other constructions now inhabited show marks of more than a few winters' frosts. The interest, therefore, of the country is chiefly limited to its physical features and its present inhabitants, whether human or of more lowly organization.

A visit to the forests behind Vulkan would be a great treat to a thorough sportsman. The large brown bear is so common that the horses are frequently attacked by it. In the middle of the month of May, during my visit, although the season was remarkably forward, and fresh food abundant, the news came down one morning that a horse had been attacked and seriously wounded in the night. These bears are extremely powerful and mischievous, and are not easily frightened. The lynx is common, also. Animals have been killed little inferior to the leopard in size and fierceness—magnificent animals, much

more pleasant to see in a museum than to meet at night, unarmed, in the forest. Many other animals of prey are not only to be found, but are common in the vast forests and almost untrodden wilds in this part of the Carpathians. Wolves are incredibly abundant, and come down in packs even in summer. A large tract of country, if not really inaccessible, is certainly never visited by strangers ; and the thick forest and rocky precipices might well test the enduring powers of the members of the Alpine Club, or of other tourists who seem to hover about Switzerland as if no other mountain land existed.

Birds of prey of the largest size and noblest kinds are also found here. The most gigantic golden eagles, the largest of the other eagles, and a singular variety of vultures and other allied species, belong to this district. The study of the specimens in the National Museum at Pesth would be a proper introduction to a visit to this valley, whether the visitor proposed to amuse himself with his gun, or to pursue natural history avocations.

The pass into Wallachia is very high, and not by any means always accessible. In winter the snow, and in spring and summer cloud and wind, are almost equally dangerous ; and no one could be found to accompany the traveller who would insist on crossing when, in the opinion of the authorities, the attempt ought not to be made. The way is so narrow in an exposed part at the top, that every year lives are lost by people being blown over. The pass can only

be crossed on horseback, and the accommodation on the Wallachian side is very indifferent. On the Hungarian side it is very fair. At the foot of the pass is the village. It is small and straggling, but looks clean, and the houses are surrounded by gardens. There is an inn, provided with a couple of clean beds and a sofa, all quite free from insects. The *cuisine*, also, is not to be despised, if the traveller can induce mine host to forget that he has been unlucky enough to have lost much cattle and other property lately, and attend to the wants of his guests. At the time of my visit, the poor man seemed to look on any fresh arrival as an additional trouble, and not a prospective benefit. He welcomed the parting guest rather than the coming one. Still his *paprika** was not to be despised; and certain other national dishes, somewhat inferior, were quite sufficiently good to ensure a fair meal, if time were given. If taken at unawares, however, the house will assuredly be found empty, and but little can be got within a reasonable time but eggs, bread, wine, and coffee. None of these are likely to be other than good, and the supply does not fail.

The cart-road from the north into the Zsil Valley has already been alluded to as in the direct line of the Vulkan Pass. It passes, indeed, through the village.

* *Paprika* is a national Hungarian dish, not unlike an Irish stew, with abundance of a red pepper made of the pimento dried and powdered. This pepper is eaten with almost everything, and is a very pleasant stimulant.

Beyond the village the road ceases, and there is only a bridle path. There is, however, in summer a good deal of communication across the pass, not only of men but of stock—horned cattle, but more frequently sheep, being taken freely backwards and forwards across the frontier for pasturage. Some small tax, or a regulation requiring a record of the number, exists at Vulkan ; and on one occasion, when coming in after a day's work, we were delayed half-an-hour at the gate, while an enormous flock of sheep were counted through. There is only a very simple wooden gate or barrier to the town. The sheep were driven into a sort of enclosure between the toll-house near the barrier and another building opposite, and the roadway being closed, the poor animals rushed through the narrow footpath as fast as they could tear, jumping over one another's heads in the most lively manner. The lambs, also, were in a state of the most profound astonishment and fright, their numbers, meanwhile, being counted, checked, shouted out, and recorded, by two of the blue-coated and much-hated officials who attend to the revenue. The flock consisted of many hundred animals.

There is no other village worth naming in the Zsil Valley, though there are several whose names appear in the map. Most of them are mere collections of a few miserable habitations, huddled together without order, and without even the faintest indication of a street. Still, at one or two of them are decent cottages, and at most of them churches, not better, indeed, than the

hovels, and not indicated by anything more costly or ornamental, than a very short, small wooden spire, or short Greek cross. Some of the churches are detached altogether from houses; and far from any signs of human habitation. Two such churches—one old, and quite neglected from its decayed state; and another, scarcely different in appearance, but more recent—are placed on a very picturesque tongue of land, between the two principal branches of the Zsil where these branches unite to form the main river, and rush through the narrow valley cut through the mountains. A point of old schist and several rude masses of limestone, extremely hard and well defended, form the tip of the tongue, and rise some 60 or 80 feet above the valley. On the smallest and outermost, and least accessible, mass of schist, are the two churches perched. Why the old one was not pulled down or burnt down, to make room for the new one, it is needless to inquire. The two structures, alike in all respects, built entirely of unpainted wood, and utterly without an idea of ornament, beyond the small spire, stand there exposed to weather, and, apparently, far removed from any house. There are, however, certainly, houses and people not far off, for on passing round towards the ford, a little above, we were suddenly greeted with a simple air played on a pipe of reeds; and presently a small lad, of some eight years old, presented himself with his very classical instrument, carrying us back to the Arcadian times, and, probably, representing a state of the population precisely identical to that which might have greeted a stranger some two thousand years

ago. Even the Paganism of the peasants is wonderfully little changed ; their costume is, no doubt, the same ; and if a few more implements are made of iron, and nails, guns, and other conveniences take the place of wooden pins, bows and arrows, &c., still in the main the people are unaltered.

Some of the side valleys, opening into the Zsil, are very interesting. They are separated from each other by lofty barriers, and much time is required to get across from one to another ; but the time is well occupied, as in this way a good idea is obtained of the surrounding country. The two principal of the side streams are the Rivadia, opposite Vulkan, and one less considerable going up to the lofty and snow-covered mountain Barang.

The latter of these valleys is especially remarkable for the great extent of old mineral workings, indicating very remarkably the character and range of the ancient washings for gold. Every part of a great terrace, about 30 feet above the present level of the stream, and occupying several square miles, is covered with small pits and hollows, a few feet deep in the gravel, where washings have formerly been carried on. All over the hills above this terrace there are similar marks, and quite up to the mountains, the indications are said to extend. Even the lower valley and the present bed of the stream are not neglected ; and here the gypsies still wash when the summer sun becomes too hot for tinkering, and no other mode suggests itself of combining idleness, pleasure, and profit.

After the two main branches of the Zsil have united,

the river, which is then both rapid and deep, boldly enters the mountain gorge, and continues to thread its way with little interruption through a comparatively narrow channel. It appears to be entirely shut in with wood and rock. The wood is thick, where the rock is not too precipitous to admit of it. The river is soon lost in the recess, and the high mountains appear to close up behind.

The upper end of the Wallachian Zsil is also very fine. The valley narrows rapidly beyond a certain point, and dwindles to a mere ravine ; but for many miles it remains pretty wide, and the stream, coming from the snows of Retgezat, is both clear and deep.

The geology of this district is peculiarly interesting, very simple, and very valuable in an economic sense. The mountains enclosing the valley are old crystalline rocks, slates and mica, schists and granites, on the east and west ; and hard limestones on the north. Beyond the limestones, still further to the north, the slaty rocks and granites recur.

The interval between these old rocks is occupied by two sets of deposits, both of modern date, but one much newer and more disturbed than the other. The least modern consists of sandstones and clays, appearing either in the valley below, or in the side valleys, of which there are many. In some places, also, the rocks of this older of the modern series appear on the hill-sides, especially on the north, resting on the limestone, almost always very much tilted, and lying at an angle of 30° or 40° to the horizon. The inclination or tilt

of these beds is always towards the valley of the Zsil, and seems to have been produced by the pushing up of the high mountains all round. It is, therefore, what geologists call a *basin*; and, like some other geological basins in our own country and elsewhere, it is full of valuable minerals. In this basin—showing itself all round the edges of the basin, breaking out in the fractures at the side, laid bare in the bottom, when the stream will admit of it—there lies an abundant supply of that source of all wealth, mineral fuel. Thick beds of coal are seen on the hill-sides, and long, narrow tunnels lay bare the coal where the surface is covered. Lumps of coal appear amongst the pebbles in the brooks; black streaks appear when the ground is turned up by the plough; the cliffs are vertical, and at their base is sometimes a black heap also of weathered coal.

All the usual indications of mineral wealth are to be seen—even by a hasty traveller—breaking out at intervals in this singular valley. Enclosed as it now is, with only two ways into it on one side, and one way out of it on the other, all this wealth lies idle and useless. But there can be little doubt that a few years will work the usual wonders, and transform this wild country to that slavish condition of the land, when the soil is turned, not to bring richer crops, but to lay bare and remove the entrails of the earth; and when, as is so often the case, Nature refuses to yield the rich harvest of vegetation, so long as the underground operations are proceeding.

The prospects of wealth for this part of Hungary are neither small nor doubtful. So large a coal-field, containing, as it would seem, such excellent coal, cannot in these days be overlooked. Placed also, as it is, within a few miles of the remarkable iron ores of Hunyad and Telek, there is additional reason why it should be developed. The railroad, whether it is continued along the Maros Valley into the heart of Siebenbürgen, or, advantage being taken of this valley, should be carried across the Carpathians through the gorge of the Zsil, must bring the coal into demand, and cause the sound of the miner's pick to be heard, and the mixed population that is met with in all industrial districts, to be congregated in this valley, hitherto so retired and unvisited.

All along the Zsil Valley, from the high hills flanking the lofty peaks of Barang on the east, to the recesses of the ravines running up into the heart of Retgezat on the west, the coal makes its appearance. Here a thin, dirty seam, there a mass twenty yards thick ; in one place, laid bare by the river or a mountain stream ; in another spot, visible from a distance on a steep hill-side ; everywhere the fact is prominent, though neither quantity nor quality are indicated to the uninstructed eye.

But the Zsil, like many of its tributaries, is seen running between steep cliffs of gravel and sand—sometimes loose and falling, sometimes compact and durable. And these gravels and sands are not tilted up like the coal-bearing rocks, neither do they show the

same tendency to incline always towards the middle of the basin. The basin or trough, originally formed out of a flat surface, by the uplifting of the rocks round its outer edges, has been filled up with vast quantities of stones and rubbish, carried down from the mountains, or drifted in by some strong current. This work must have been executed while the basin was under water, when the mountains adjacent were islands, and perhaps when they were being rapidly worn away by tidal waves. The basin has thus been covered by a coat of pebbles, sand, and rock, often several hundred feet thick, burying the coal, and preventing the coal-rocks from being seen. And this accumulation is not, like the coal series, dipping towards the centre of the basin. For the most part it has all been lifted from one side (the north) long after the coal rocks had got their position. The amount of lifting up may have been considerable, and must have been enough to elevate the whole district several hundred feet above the waves. It was probably connected with the latest of the great upheavals that have affected Europe.

While, however, the lower sandstones and clays contain so much coal—perhaps the most valuable of all minerals, as requiring and involving works of industry, and improving the resources of a country by admitting the use of steam power—the upper sands and gravels have also their value, for almost all of them contain a marked proportion of gold. But the gold is not, like the coal, traceable in regular deposits from place to place.

It is buried with much that is worthless, covering and covered by enormous heaps of rubbish, and it lies in no order. There may be in one spot metal to the value of thousands of pounds, and a few hundred yards off, in rocks of precisely the same kind, there may be nothing procurable. One man, working systematically and with intelligence, may not in many weeks obtain enough gold to pay labourers' wages, and another, idle, reckless, and careless, may, in half an hour, stumble on a "nugget," or on some pile of gold-dust of enormous value.

There is nothing very advantageous to the real interests of a district in the discovery of a gold-field beyond the increased population attracted thither, while positive and durable advantages are derived from coal, and the value of the latter mineral may be estimated within narrow limits.

Gold is a speculation, in which luck and chance are of more avail than industry and knowledge. Coal is a certainty, with the exercise of reasonable care, and with the resources of capital. It is to be hoped that the Zsil valley will soon present such evidence of profitable industry as its valuable mineral wealth deserves.

There is a curious and interesting fact, and one not at all easily explained, with regard to the thickest bed of coal in the Zsil coal field. In many places this seam is discovered by merely removing the-turf, the roots of the grasses being buried in a black powder, or clinging round little fragments of dirty coal. In other places it forms a cliff. The bed is so thick that its natural inter-

section at the surface is thus almost always easily recognized. And it would seem, that although there was little known in modern times of this coal-field, the recognition of its value is not a thing of yesterday, for in many places, even in the wildest parts of the hills, far from a village, there is a considerable tract of ground where the clays and sandstones have been burnt, apparently by large fires made on the surface, the marks of burning being traceable for some inches below the surface. It occurred to me that large signal fires might have been made and kept up in these places for a long while, fed with coal from the adjacent bed, or that some manufacture was carried on formerly on the spot. In any case, the coal has certainly been used. But this curious burnt appearance is not confined to high and prominent places, nor does it extend beyond the places where the thick coal comes to the surface. I saw it myself in several spots, and was told of it in many more. If noticed where the coal is not now visible, we have only to dig a foot or two to find the mineral. No pits are seen, and there are no trenches whence the coal may have been dug. Judging from these facts, and from the entire absence of any idea on the subject among the present inhabitants, the burning probably took place very long ago. Perhaps before the Romans entered Wallachia, the Pagan inhabitants here burnt their dead. I could not hear of any fragments of pottery or other indications even of the rudest kind to mark the presence of civilized man as connected with this burnt surface of the ground.

From some of the many side valleys of the Zsil there are paths up to villages situated among the mountains. These lead to points of view of extreme beauty, showing a mixture of wild, rocky grandeur, richly-wooded, park-like tracts, covered with the greenest and richest turf, deep gorges with water running or falling through them, and considerable tracts of cultivated land studded with pretty, white, picturesque houses.

One may pass up one such valley and across the hills, and so descend into another. From the top noble views are obtained of the opposite mountains, with the snowy peaks of Barang not far off. During the ascent the views of the valley below are always beautiful.

Passing out of the charming valley of the Zsil, by the road opposite Vulkan, we first cross the river by a long and well-constructed wooden bridge. This bridge has been recently re-built, and is apparently very strong, but it has terrible struggles to maintain its position when the river is flooded. For weeks together in winter there are no means of crossing from one side of the valley to the other if any accident happens to this bridge, for even in summer when the waters are low there is sometimes danger of being carried away while crossing the fords on horseback, and when there is much water it would be hardly possible to succeed without dismounting and swimming. Numerous little wooden foot-bridges are to be found, consisting of the trunks of long trees placed from bank to bank. Sometimes two trees are placed end to end, one from each bank, the ends overlapping, and supported by a stout forked pole in the

middle. The foot-passenger may thus practise those ingenious balancings, brought to perfection by Blondin when he crossed Niagara on a tight rope ; but without some little preliminary instruction and experience it is not pleasant to find one's-self tottering on a rough plank nine inches wide, across a rapid noisy stream of deep and rather cold water, or stepping from one such plank to another when half-way across.

Like other things, however, one gets accustomed to this style of travelling, and, to me, it always seemed better than the alternative, namely, riding through water nearly up to the knees, when nothing could prevent the boots from getting filled, and no means existed of drying them during the rest of one's sojourn in the neighbourhood. The horses are, however, so thoroughly accustomed to cross the water that there is little or no danger, although, in many places, the number of loose rolling stones make the bottom very bad, and the footing uncertain.

The bridge at Vulkan was constructed on a system of mutual help. Those who had nothing else supplied labour, and those who could afford it gave material or money. It was rapidly completed, and seems likely to stand.

From the bridge the road runs up the Valley of Rivadia for some distance, and then mounts by a steep and long ascent to the summit of the ridge which here divides the Zsil from the Strehl. The pass is about 1000 feet above the Zsil Valley on the south side, and fully 1300 above the Strehl on the other

side, the difference, 300 feet, being the difference of level between the true mountain valley of the Zsil and the valley of the Strehl, which is open towards the north to the Maros and the plains of the Danube.* The rocks passed are, first limestone and then gneiss, but at the top a very felspathic granite is found, marking the importance of the water-shed as a granitic axis.

The descent from the summit of the pass to Krivadia is not remarkable, but affords many pleasing views of scenery. The country is different in form, the hills being more rounded and the valley less shut in. The tertiary sandstones and conglomerates, as well as the coal measures, are also absent, much of the ground is cultivated, and there seems everywhere a sufficient supply of water.

* The elevations here given are approximations obtained by a single set of observations made with an aneroid barometer.

CHAPTER V.

Hungarian and Wallachian Populations of South-Eastern Hungary.—The Races.—Their Appearance and Costumes.

THE moment one enters Hungary, the Magyar peculiarities of personal appearance and costume are felt and recognized; and in passing from those districts where the population is truly Magyar, to those where the Wallachian element prevails, the change is quite as remarkable. We have, in fact, in this part of Europe, several very singular types of the human family exhibited in close contact—races that have for centuries inhabited the same soil, and been exposed to similar influences, but who have each retained that peculiarity of feature and form that denotes nationality. Why is it that the Eastern people generally are so tenacious of these typical characters, while the Western tribes, almost without exception, change, amalgamate, and adapt themselves? What is the secret involved in the preservation by the Jew, the Tartar, and the Arab, of those points of structure which in the Saxon, the Celt, and the Frank, merge so rapidly into some new variety, when circumstances of climate come into action? These are queries that present themselves occasionally even in England, when we see the Jew, or the Malay, the

Negro, the Hindoo, or the Chinese, walking in our streets, or mixing, as they occasionally do, in society. But they become both more difficult and more interesting when, in a country like Hungary, we meet the Magyar, the Jew, and the Turk, the descendant of the old Roman, the Dacian modified into the modern Wallach, the Saxon, the Gypsy, and sometimes other tribes, all settled harmoniously for centuries, each acknowledging the other as a fellow-countryman, and yet each as distinct as if he never left his native soil.

Few things are more interesting than the study of national character under circumstances of this kind. Few places are better adapted to study these matters conveniently than the south of Hungary, the Wallachian border, and the valleys near the Military frontier.

The Hungarian prides himself on his Tartar origin. To those interested in his history—and what Englishman can help feeling some interest in the struggles of a free people to retain an honourable position among more powerful nations pressing them in on all sides?—he will tell of the countries north of the Himalayan mountains which his ancestors once inhabited; he will trace his language to theirs, and will admire it the more as it differs more sensibly from the great languages of Europe. His love of show; his sense of the picturesque in dress and equipment; his quickness and cleverness, leading to little practical result; all these confirm the story he tells. Even in small matters he is more Oriental than Occidental. His pipe and coffee are luxuries enjoyed to far greater perfection at home

in Hungary than among the ruling race in Vienna. His very dishes savour of the East. The *paprika* already alluded to owes its charm to the hot pepper with which it is made. The consumption of fowls is enormous. The style of building, admitting of little or no view from the house into any public place, and the style of dress—are all eminently Eastern. The complicated form of salutation, and the respectful kissing of hands, belong to another country than the busy West.

There is thus in Hungary a degree of nationality existing, which has much interest and attraction for the thoughtful traveller. In Wallachia, the peculiarities are equally marked, distinguishing the Wallachians from Hungarians as completely as these are distinguished from English. If the Hungarian language and style are incomprehensible from their Tartar and Altai peculiarities, the Wallachian, derived from Greek, Latin, Turkish, and Barbarian, is just as puzzling in this mixture. So large a number of Wallachian words are, however, of Latin origin, that one soon becomes familiar with their sound; while anyone not acquainted with Turkish or Eastern languages, may be weeks in Hungary without connecting one Magyar sound with any familiar sense. Almost the first time the Wallachian dialect is heard, there are words spoken that tell their own story. A proclamation or a newspaper printed in the modern character, if not comprehensible as a whole, is at least suggestive. But when the old written language is seen on crosses and inscriptions by

the roadside, we are again thrown into confusion. The characters bear much resemblance to the Greek, but are not identical: they are more Slavonic than Greek. Such inscriptions are generally illegible from other causes; but one loses little, for their meaning is rarely important.

After the Magyar, or true Hungarian, and the Wallach, or inhabitant of the old Roman settlements, the next most important person is the Gypsy. And the gypsy of this part of Europe, ranging undisturbed through the land, probably much as he has been accustomed to range for centuries, is undoubtedly more typical, and perhaps of purer breed than in countries where his nationality, though not lost, is confused by the pressure of surrounding civilization. The gypsy of the valleys of the Siebenbürgen is thus a more perfect and typical specimen even than the gypsy of Granada, in Spain, and far more so than the gypsy of England. But though different, the difference is one only of degree.

Of the Hungarians there are but two classes, the noble and the peasant. All who direct labour, as well as those who merely enjoy the fruits of labour, belong to the higher, and those who perform the drudgery are of the lower, class.

Before the late revolution, by which all that is in Hungary and all belonging to Hungary has undergone a complete and vital change, the noble was a feudal lord in a sense never understood in England. He paid no tolls or taxes. He administered the law to his own

serfs, and he received homage more than feudal. He generally lived in his castle on his estate. He was subject to little control, either civil or ecclesiastical, and his people under him were ignorant, and, perhaps, in a low sense of the word, happy. Since the revolution the case is altered. The lord is impoverished, but the serf is not much enriched. The castle is abandoned, and the cottage not yet improved. The taxes are multiplied more than tenfold, and the villages are under the sway of the customs' police instead of the feudal lord. This latter change is hardly an improvement in any sense.

Of the Wallachians of the frontier, as of the gypsies, there neither is, nor ever was, any real distinction of classes. It is a nomadic population, poor, but not wanting much. There are numerous small estates, and the holder of each estate farms it. The young men go far away, and exercise various handicraft callings. The miners, in the principal mining districts of Hungary, who are not either Bohemians, Silesians, or Galicians, are, almost without exception, Wallachians. Large mining establishments exist in which there are scarcely any Hungarians. This peculiarity, namely, the employment of Wallachians instead of Magyars, is very marked. The Wallachians are decidedly the more industrious race, but still they remain mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. They are not often to be found placed in responsible positions, but this is not because they are dishonest, but simply that in the struggle for precedence they allow themselves to be left behind.

The gypsies, as we have remarked in a former chapter, are clever, and especially understand working in metals, but they are not to be depended on in matters of honesty. They live in villages in winter, but encamp after their fashion during summer.

Further on, in the central part of the Siebenbürgen, is the remarkable German population, inhabiting towns and a country in which their ancestors settled some centuries ago, but with these we have here nothing to do. They are well worthy of a special pilgrimage, and would repay careful inquiry. They present a multitude of mediæval peculiarities, invaluable to the student of history.

To return now to the population of the part of the country to which our remarks are limited. The Hungarian gentleman is, at the present time, readily known by his costume, but his manners and general appearance would also distinguish him. He is polite and considerate, and well-bred, as, indeed, a gentleman in any other part of the world must be to deserve the name, but he differs from the German of the north and from the Austrian in a hundred little matters, readily noticed, but not easily described. Young Hungary is more quiet and reserved, and less independent of society than is common now with young France, young England, or young Germany, but the young are not educated as their parents were. The classic days of Hungary, when almost every educated person not only learnt and spoke Latin, as a second mother tongue, at college, but continued to speak it in

society through life, are gone. Latin is just as rare an accomplishment in this sense in Hungary as it is elsewhere. Hungarian and German are understood equally well, and apparently are spoken indifferently, but at home, and when only intimate friends are present, the native language prevails, and it is certain that many of the children learn little German till they are instructed at school. The native language is now a patriotic distinction.

In one interesting family group into which I was introduced I found a family of several grown-up daughters living with their parents, and some children of both sexes of a third generation. Elsewhere the three generations in one house are not uncommon. In the case I allude to, the daughters spoke little German. They understood it, but it was evident that they regarded it as a foreign language, and turned with greater satisfaction to their own whenever they could fairly do so. The children neither spoke nor understood German. In another smaller family I noticed the same condition. The lady apologized for her want of familiarity with German, which, however, she spoke quite well, with a pretty accent just sufficient to mark the foreigner, but the child, though a clever, quick little thing, and speaking well both Hungarian and Wallachian, neither understood nor desired to understand German.

It is evident that there is a meaning in this. A people, who form part of, and have in every direction the most intimate relations with, one of the great nationalities of Europe, but who sullenly refuse, as far

as they conveniently can, to acknowledge the association thrust upon them, are not in a favourable state for advance. The Hungarian language may be, and no doubt is, interesting historically, and may contain much valuable literature, but it is too much isolated, and Hungary is too small to retain for ever such a peculiarity.

Probably this nervous anxiety to preserve it is as much derived from an intuitive sense that it must soon pass away as from an idea that it may by an effort be retained.

In one of my earliest continental trips (some five-and-twenty years ago) I travelled through a part of Bohemia, hardly ever visited then by strangers, and often had considerable difficulty in making myself understood—the older Bohemian people at that time speaking no German. On more than one occasion boys or girls had to be fetched from the schools to interpret for me. These boys and girls are now grown up, and speak German habitually, so that their children probably will hardly understand Bohemian, and in half a century that dialect will probably die out. It would certainly do so, but for the present mania for Panslavism. Something of the same kind, but not so rapidly, must take place in Hungary. At present the great mass of the people are not obliged to learn German in the schools, but this must soon be the case. Thus the Hungarian language may last somewhat longer than the Bohemian, but the end is approaching.

Many of the Hungarians have a peculiar drawling

mode of pronouncing both their own language and German ; but especially the latter. It is not pleasant. The ladies who speak German do so very prettily ; but the accent is recognizable.

I was not much in those parts of Hungary where the landed proprietors chiefly reside ; and my experience is not, therefore, worth much with regard to them ; but what I did see was highly favourable, and the association of classes appeared to me to be without the smallest sacrifice of dignity on either hand. The Hungarian peasant is as independent as he is respectful ; and the lord is simple, and natural, in his behaviour to the peasant.

The Wallachian population, so far as it fell under my observation, is one of peasants only. The families of the higher classes, and the landed proprietors, are not resident in any part of the border country ; and, although I fell in with some Wallachian gentlemen, they were from a distance, and were travellers like myself. Judging from them, and from what I heard in other ways, I conclude that the Italian element prevails with them much more than any other. They speak little German ; but their own *lingua franca* they combine readily with Italian and French. They also speak Turkish. The towns of Wallachia are not very easily reached, nor do they appear to offer much that is noticeable ; but they are hardly known to English travellers. Some of them are probably worth a visit.

In point of costume the Hungarian gentleman is generally very marked. He would seem to have a

passion for all kinds of embroidery, and it is seen on every outer garment rather profusely spread. Braided or embroidered lines on the neat, tight-fitting jacket, or simple surtout, take the place of buttons, and extend far beyond the lines which buttons have made their own. Braid covers the waistcoat, of which the form is also peculiar. In place of trousers, the Hungarian wears tight-fitting pantaloons, also braided, and well-polished Hessian boots, reaching to the knee. A braided cap, and a deeply-embroidered cloak, large or small, according to the season, or a braided fur coat in winter, complete the costume. The amount of embroidery varies according to the taste of the individual; but the fondness for this ornament is universal. Black and grey are the favourite colours for general wear.

The Hungarian lady also wears a costume; but it is less marked, and consists merely in some modification of that peculiar jacket, common in England some time ago, and known as the *polka*. This jacket, trimmed with fur or braided, or decorated in some way, forms part of the costume of every patriotic dame. In other respects, so far as I could learn, the imagination and fashion of the day is allowed full play. Crinoline, at any rate, reigns supreme in the cities, as in the cities of all other parts of Europe.

The lower classes of Hungarians wear costumes very varied, and often very picturesque. Each part of the country has its own, and the difference is considerable in different provinces. The women often dress al-

most in the same style as the men, when working in the fields; but for state occasions they have a peculiar costume handed down from generation to generation.

The common working dress of the peasant is a shirt, or kettle, and a pair of very loose, short, white trousers, reaching to the knees. Very old rubbishy half-boots, and a clumsy cloth wrapper round the lower part of the leg, from the knee to the boot, form a termination. The kittel, or blouse, is tied in at the waist by a broad leather belt, sometimes a foot wide. A large loose great coat, made of undyed wool, woven by the women of the household, and put together at home, is either worn in the usual way, or merely thrown over the shoulders. This coat is worn by women as well as men, and, indeed, as I have said, the field-dress, generally, of the two sexes is so very similar, that they are not easily distinguished at a distance. The same boots and wrappers round the leg, and often the same large round hat, covering the head, leave little to remark. When the coat is not worn, the women are seen to have a chemise tied round the neck, and a short petticoat in the place of shirt and trousers. In winter, and even in summer, an exceedingly simple, long tunic, with sleeves, made of the untanned skin of the sheep, with the wool left, is a common dress of the men, when the coat is not used or possessed. This dress is worn with the wool outside, or inside, according to the season, and is said to be extremely comfortable, and to resist all weathers. Both men and women are seen with it.

The coat, when new, is often coarsely embroidered, or ornamented with some design on the back, occasionally in colours. It is very heavy, and serviceable, and looks well. When old, it is applied to various uses; I have seen it converted into a bag, and filled with hay. It is, however, extremely durable, and very few coats would, probably, be required by a man during his whole lifetime.

The covering of the head varies. In the open country, high, cylindrical, sheepskin caps, are not uncommon; and these are very picturesque. Sometimes they give place to exceedingly broad-brimmed, flat hats, and, sometimes, to small caps.

Although the ladies in large towns, and cities, follow the latest Parisian fashions, and are not so easily distinguished by costume as the gentlemen, still, in the country, and the smaller villages, they adhere, more or less, to costumes. Very pleasing and piquant are these costumes. The neck is bare, and a black jacket sits jauntily over a delicate, white chemise tied neatly above the bosom. Full, but short, sleeves leave a round arm bare, for any culinary operations, or other household work, that may be going on; and the skirt of the dress, though full, has not that inconvenient amplitude that is so often seen in the towns. The hair is dressed neatly, and simply, and little ornament is worn on the head.

The Wallachian peasantry, near the frontier, present a very different appearance to the Hungarians, and are easily recognized by their wild appearance, dark com-

plexion, black, flowing hair, and bright, fierce, black eyes. They are, however, harmless enough, in spite of these terrible looks. They are very poor, and seem to live in the simplest manner. In point of costume, they certainly approach the very simplest contrivance ever introduced.

The foundation of the female costume in Wallachia is a long chemise, reaching from the neck to the ankles, open in front to the waist. It is tied in with strings round the neck and wrists, and also round the waist. Girls up to the age of fourteen or thereabouts, and not unfrequently older women, wear nothing else. Young children in summer are either quite naked or have a loose shirt. All the women wear this chemise, but it is occasionally added to and ornamented.

The next stage in the dress, and one almost universal in many parts of the country, is a belt of moderate width about the waist, which usually terminates in two aprons, one in front and the other behind. These aprons are either long or short at pleasure, but when long there is a short fringe appended, and when short a long fringe; so that apron and fringe together terminate towards the ankle. The aprons and fringes are generally of some dyed woollen material, often not unlike a plaid. Occasionally the apron disappears, and a long fringe hangs from the belt, while sometimes the fringe is absent and the apron a mere strip of woollen. If one of the aprons is absent it is generally that which should hang in front.

A bodice is the next advance. It is often seen in

the towns,—rarely in the villages. When put on it is generally in honour of some holiday, and being very pretty and often laced in front and connected with loose white sleeves tied in at the elbow, it must be regarded rather as an article of coquetry than of costume. Beyond this all is according to the taste and means of the owner, but jewels of every kind, whether of precious metals or precious stones, and even humble imitations of these, are comparatively rare.

The covering of the head admits of a good deal of variety, and like the general dress its simplest form is very simple indeed, consisting only of a long strip of white linen fastened in some way to the hair and floating in the wind. A little ingenuity easily converts this strip of linen into a head-dress, either a turban or some other form, according to the taste of the wearer, or such as is the prevailing style of the village or district. In a village in the Military frontier, inhabited by a Bulgarian colony, the linen is so arranged as to make two horns, and as the material is generally of some coloured pattern these two horns have a very curious effect. In other places the head-dress is so arranged as to cover part of the face, leaving only the eyes and nose visible.

The feet are often bare, but in bad weather, or for rough work, both women and men obtain, in some way, possession of a peculiar kind of half-boots, of the kind called by us high-lows. These are, according to my experience, uniformly so old and worn as to be

utterly useless. Whence they are obtained, whether they are manufactured in the desolate state in which they are always seen, or whether they are the results of some gigantic speculation in old boots by the united Jews of England and Germany, is a curious subject of inquiry. Certainly, I have never seen so many boots together so old and so worthless, even in a long inspection of the various rag fairs of London or Frankfort.

If these boots are worn, the legs—of which the proportions are generally good, and seen to advantage with the ordinary costume—are not unfrequently swathed up to the knees with dirty rolls of linen-rags; a curious arrangement, and one of which the object is not clear.

In some of the Wallachian villages of large size, it is not pleasant to see the picturesque national costume replaced by the vulgarest and coarsest imitation of the dress of the common people in towns. The contrast between the white chemise, red fringed aprons, black bodice, flowing linen head-gear, and naked feet, and an elaborate silk gown, stuck out with crinoline, flaunting in all the colours of the rainbow, a large staring bonnet, with flowers and fruits larger and brighter than Nature supplies, on the head, and clumsy shoes on the feet, is so strong and so disagreeable, that one wonders it does not strike those who thus disfigure themselves. Happily, the occasions are rare in which these grand transformations are made.

The gypsies offer curious varieties of costume. In

the country, in summer, they are often merely covered by a few rags—not so much the mark of misery and want as of utter carelessness and indifference. The children run about without even a rag. At the same time, I have seen a gypsy woman dressed out, not only gaily, but handsomely, with good taste, and with all the materials of excellent description. This woman was walking on a country road between two villages, and could hardly have expected to meet any one but her own people.

There are Jews in the south of Hungary, but in the poorer and more open parts of the country they are not often met with. They are generally recognized as much by their singular long coats, reaching to the heels, and long beards, as by their peculiar countenances. Certainly, the Jewish physiognomy has lost nothing of its marked features in this part of the world, and the character is as little altered.

Throughout the country, the women ride on horse-back *en cavalier*, but on such occasions they are usually rather thickly clothed, as it is only the better and richer peasants who can afford the luxury of riding. The poorer women work in the fields with the men, and perform all kinds of manual labour.

The younger Hungarian women are frequently very good-looking, and the children often beautiful. The face is round and cheerful, but the Asiatic origin is marked by the form both of head and face. The colour of the children is sometimes light, and the hair pale, but the men, and even the women, become copper-

coloured as they advance in years. The Wallachians are much darker, even from childhood, which is not remarkable, as they certainly belong to a South European family. Among them are many specimens of real beauty, especially among the men and the children of both sexes. The women, as is usual when they are early exposed to weather and hard work, soon lose their beauty, and become old very rapidly. The men retain their hair and features to a great age. The gypsies are often handsome.

In this part of the Siebenbürgen but few traces are found of those German colonies, which have so greatly affected the population of the central part of the Duchy. Occasionally fair-haired children appear, but they are exceptional. The Germans seem to have performed their work of colonization very systematically, and very characteristically. They did exactly what was required, and they did no more. There is thus a sharply-marked line of demarcation among the different peoples, and Magyar, Wallack and German, Gypsy and Jew, have inhabited a small tract of country for centuries without any one seriously affecting the nationality of any other.

CHAPTER VI.

Hungarian and Wallachian Populations *continued*.—Manners, Customs, Habitations, and Churches.—The Priests of the Greek Church.

THE manners of the Hungarians, and their customs in the Siebenbürgen and Banat, are very simple, primitive, and pleasing. Among the higher class, the ladies of the household perform almost all those services for which, in England, we have special servants; and they do so with a good-will and grace particularly agreeable. They are excellent cooks—they superintend, if they do not make, all the dishes for all meals; and, if strangers are present, they even serve the dishes, wait upon the guests, and, perhaps, do not sit down at all during the meal. The young ladies of a large family will all be engaged together on the arrival of an expected visitor—one assisting to cook, another bringing the dishes to table, a third seeing that all the guests are provided for, and a fourth clearing away. Sometimes one of the party will sit at table during the meal, but will hardly eat anything in her anxiety to perform the duties of hospitality. More frequently they will eat their meal in another room, and sit down at table afterwards, taking their share in the conversation without any *gêne* or shyness.

In the morning, again, when coffee is served, no one will be in attendance but the ladies, and they will not take their meal till every one is served. There is evidently no affectation in this, and it is done without effort. The drawing-room, however, is not neglected ; and it is evident that the ladies who are thus homely and useful, are not less accomplished than their sisters in larger towns and cities, who leave the carrying out of their hospitable intentions to their paid assistants.

The behaviour of children to their parents is singularly respectful. A child, on entering the room, or leaving table, will walk quietly to the father, and, taking his hand, kiss the back of it, and then kiss his cheek. The parent will then take leave of the little one by returning the kiss. Afterwards, the child makes the same acknowledgment to other relatives present. The younger ones will follow the same course to a stranger, but the elder ones merely bow. All the children seem to be carefully brought up and well managed, and, as is usual on the Continent, they are much with their parents, and all the family have their meals together.

The habit of kissing the hand is retained by the lower classes throughout the south of Hungary and Transylvania, and probably in other places, as well as in the Tyrol, where it has often been remarked. If any favour has been received, that is the recognized acknowledgment ; but if, in merely walking on the high road, a parcel of youngsters are met going to,

or returning from, school, the ordeal becomes serious. Each little boy or girl will come up to kiss the hand of his or her feudal superior; and should the great man be too much occupied, they fall on his friends and companions. I have had my hand kissed in this way a score of times in a few minutes, on meeting a troop of school children while in company with a gentleman inhabiting the district.

When passing along in one of the common carts of the country, it is very rarely indeed that the country people fail to recognize a stranger, or any person of station at all superior to their own, and they make the recognition in a very marked way. All persons on meeting, uncover the head, retaining the hat in the hand for some little time. Passing through a village, however, the scene is much more imposing. Outside many of the houses there is a rough bench, and sometimes a covered seat, for the accommodation of the inhabitants. As there is nothing to keep them inside their houses, except when asleep (and not always then), the men congregate about some favourite spot, and half-a-score at a time will be seen at a distance lying down, some on these benches, and some on the ground. The women are perhaps a little way off gossiping. As a vehicle approaches, all, without exception, stand up, the men quickly arranging themselves in a long row, with hats off, and there they remain till the great people approach. As the cart passes, all, with one accord, bow nearly to the ground. The women stop talking. Half-a-dozen such groups will be passed in a single

village, but the behaviour is always the same. Often in the open country, I have seen both men and women leave their field-work, of whatever kind, to range themselves in a similar way before bowing. When apparently fast asleep on the ground, I have seen them wake up, place themselves in position, made their salaam, and lie down again to take another nap, evidently considering that they were performing a routine of the most ordinary kind. I remember noticing a little boy two or three years old, clothed only in a very old and large hat, probably thrown away by some grown-up person. On my approach, making a great effort, he took off this hat (almost too heavy for him to lift), and after sweeping it as gracefully as he could, he endeavoured to put it on again in vain. There is no limit to this politeness.

But the respect of the lower class for the upper is not confined to externals, it is really felt and acted on systematically, and in cases where there is no idea of other return than simple politeness. They will go out of the way for some distance to act as guides, where a few words would be sufficient. They will place their whole establishment at your command, and will in return hardly expect any pecuniary acknowledgment, and be grateful for any that may be offered. We had an example of this on one occasion, when weather-bound at a small village, where there was one house more decent than the rest in which we took shelter. The house consisted only of two rooms and a sort of

open entry of some size, in which was a stove, and an open corridor behind. The owners were not at home, and the furnished room was locked up. The rest of the house, consisting only of bare walls, was open, and we took possession of the corridor, sharing its friendly shelter with a few Wallachian peasants who were already there. The weather not improving, we decided to stay all night. A fire was lighted in the stove to dry the wet wraps, and boil water. After a time, the owners appeared, and the best room was then opened, and we were allowed and invited to arrange ourselves as best we might. The owner, his wife and family, lay on the floor in the only other room, which was quite without furniture, and to us was given up the furnished apartment usually occupied by the family. Nothing was demanded for this disturbance.

The food arrangements in the country in this part of Hungary are not inconvenient, and the food itself is generally good. Even the poorest are said to obtain much more meat than is usual in Germany, and their corn food is very nourishing. The bread is always good, and the wine is superior to wines of the same class and price in any part of Germany.

The ordinary routine of meals is as follows :—Coffee (always good) served in a tumbler, and in most places with milk, is ready in the early morning, and a morsel of bread is eaten at the same time. Towards noon is dinner-time. Some kind of soup, bouilli with stewed vegetables and potatoes, a kind of home-made solid macaroni or vermicelli (*nudel* and *strudel*), a national dish consisting of meat stewed with gravy and red

pepper (*paprika*), or one of the national varieties of fried meat or fowl (either of them excellent); these are followed by a pudding, and that by roast meat and salad. The various table wines of Hungary are heady, and contain a large percentage of alcohol without being very full-bodied; they improve, however, by age, and it is impossible to recognize a common wine that has been kept ten or more years, when compared with a wine of the same vineyard much more recent. Less than ten years seems insufficient to bring out the flavour. Few of the wines have much bouquet or aroma, a want probably due to the style of making, which is rather primitive. The wines are almost always sound and wholesome, if not always pleasant. The only other common alcoholic drink is an exceedingly nasty spirit, made from a kind of plum (*zwetchgen*), very abundant in all parts of Germany. It is sometimes tasted before meals. The evening meal is nearly a repetition of that at mid-day.

Many of the rivers of Hungary abound with fish of various kinds, including some of the most excellent that are brought to table, but it is seldom that they can be obtained without previous special arrangement. The same may be said of the wild animals in the forests, many of which might be had for the trouble of shooting, but which are never seen at table. The bear seems never eaten, the wild boar very rarely, and the roe and red deer are very scarce in the market, though said to be everywhere in the mountains. Even birds, of which there are also many, are quite neglected.

The fish are, beyond comparison, the finest obtainable from fresh water. At least three kinds of sturgeon, all very common in the Hungarian waters, yield a food more compact, better-flavoured, and certainly more nourishing than any fresh-water fish known in Western Europe. When cooked properly, and eaten hot, they are, to my taste, superior to every fish but salmon. They most resemble excellent and well-flavoured large turbot. The flesh is white, firm, and not watery, and as the animal grows to a large size there is no annoyance from bones. All the fish of the sturgeon family contain a good deal of oil, but this only gives flavour, and when properly cooked and eaten hot the oily taste is got rid of. There is, however, a very disagreeable style of cooking common enough in the towns, and one specimen of *fogasch*, *dick*, or any of the other fishes thus prepared, is almost enough to give a distaste for the whole family. The fish is fried in oil, and served cold, steeped in vinegar. It is then intended to be eaten with more vinegar and oil.

Besides the cartilaginous fish, there is much fine trout in the Hungarian mountain streams. This I could never obtain for eating, as it seemed quite impossible to induce any idle boy or man to earn a few pence in this way. There is much other fish of many kinds, but it is not obtainable.

The style of houses in Hungary and Wallachia is generally the same. Those of larger size are built round two sides of a square, the other two sides being occupied by sheds for carts or carriages and stabling.

An open corridor runs round these two sides, looking towards the court-yard, and here in fine weather is the general lounge. All the principal rooms open out from this corridor but they also communicate with each other. In the angle is a staircase leading to an upper floor where a gallery takes the place of the corridor. Very often the upper floor is only an attic, and is used for stores, the whole inhabited house being a little above the ground. The principal room on the ground-floor is the eating-room, and next to it is the kitchen. The bed-rooms are tolerably large and roomy, and are also used as sitting-rooms, being handsomely furnished according to the means of the proprietor, the tables covered with books and the walls with pictures, among which portraits of distinguished patriots occupy a very prominent place. In some of the villages, in the inns, even of very good appearance, and well appointed, I was struck by the number of French prints that appeared on the walls. These were of a class by no means such as would be considered proper for such a position in England, but they seemed to excite no attention from my Hungarian companions.*

The sleeping accommodation in all Hungarian inns I found to be quite as good as the appearance of the town or village would justify one in expecting, and the state with regard to dirt not so bad as I had been

* The same peculiarity of taste is remarked by Mr. Paget as extending to the churches. I did not myself see anything of the kind, and it is not unlikely to have altered since the date of Mr. Paget's book.

led to expect by the study of Murray and the experience of Mr. Paget. I imagine that the last twenty years have done much to improve all parts of the country in this respect. In some places the beds were excellent and scrupulously clean, and in others, though very unpromising to the eye, the result was satisfactory. Of course, there were exceptions, but they were certainly rare, as I did not lose more than two or three nights' rest while in the country from the attacks of fleas, which to me are singularly troublesome. It is true my visit was made in the month of May, but the weather was already very hot, and two months earlier in the year I have suffered far more in Spain and some parts of Italy than I did then in Hungary.

There is a disagreeable custom here, as in many parts of Germany, namely, the sewing or buttoning the upper sheet of the bed to a coverlet, which is a kind of light feather bed or duvet. As there is no other covering whatever, and no blanket below, one is reduced either to sleep under this duvet or to lie on the bed without any covering at all, alternatives not always pleasant.

On the whole, however, the worst parts of Hungary visited by me (and my journeys included many places hardly ever visited by English or other foreign travellers) are far superior in all those important travelling comforts—food, drink, and sleeping accommodation—to many other parts of Europe into which Englishmen occasionally penetrate. Neither is the locomotion so bad as to put one to any serious inconvenience beyond that occasioned by a little delay. A covered cart without

springs does not sound very promising, but there are many worse modes of travelling over bad roads, and should an accident happen it is easily remedied. The horses, if small and wretched-looking, are able to work, and will get over their thirty or forty miles without complaint. The worst point is, that, in the event of very bad weather, the only thing to be done is to wait in the best quarters that can be obtained till the state of the roads improves, and progress is possible.

Some of the second-class houses, such as that at Krivadia already alluded to, consisting of only three rooms, or rather two rooms and an entrance, are inhabited by families quite well enough off to possess luxuries of furniture and dress. The poorer houses are limited to one room, in addition to the entry, and in many of them there are portions constructed of basket-work, used for storage. In a country where the climate is very extreme, the winter cold intense, but not lasting very long, and the summer both long and very hot, the people almost always live out of doors the greater part of the year, and I was informed that the usual sleeping-room in summer is the corridor, a pleasant place enough, exposed to the air, but not without a roof. In winter, those possessed of such accommodation are said to find their carts superior to their beds, wrapping themselves up in their sheep-skins, careless of every event that may happen around them, and neglecting the house altogether.

There is a still lower, poorer, and more miserable style of houses often seen in the smaller villages. A

few sticks support mud walls, enclosing a space measuring about eight feet by six, and a mud-covered conical roof, not more than ten or twelve feet high, completes the habitation. A collection of huts of this kind resembles a number of large ant-hills more than any other object, but many villages consist of hardly anything else.

Few of the better villages, even of the smaller size, are without two or three churches, and even the worst almost always have one and sometimes two. Religious feeling in Hungary, in every part of the country, and at all times, has been and is remarkably free, and Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Greek Church, with various forms of Protestant worship, are all equally tolerated, and where the population is large enough each has its temple. Near the frontier, however, and in all those parts of Hungary referred to in these chapters, the country has been too much disturbed, up to a comparatively recent period, to admit of much decoration in these sacred buildings. They are generally very plain, even in the larger towns, and, in the small villages but one shade superior to the poorest cottages. Four walls and a roof, a low wooden tower terminating in a low wooden spire, roofed with shingles and neither painted nor otherwise coloured or defended from weather:—such is the usual style in the smaller places, and a plain brick building, with a somewhat more ornamental spire, is seen in the towns. The Roman Catholic churches are known by the long Latin cross, and the Greek churches by the Greek cross with short equal

arms. The Protestant churches are without the cross. Within, the Roman Catholic place of worship exhibits the usual tawdry apparatus so characteristic of the country parish churches of that persuasion everywhere, and the Lutheran is quite plain. The Greek Church, whether of that modern variety called "conformed Greek," acknowledging the Pope as the head of the Church, or the old unconforming Greek persuasion, ignoring him altogether, except as Bishop of Rome, presents its usual characteristics. These, however, being less familiar, are perhaps worthy of description. There is little difference between the two sects, and the account in a subsequent paragraph applies, more or less accurately, to all varieties.

The Greek Church is the prevailing religion in all the border country between Hungary and Wallachia, and seems to be the only form of Christianity among the Wallachians. The churches are generally very poor and shabby, but not without interest as indicating the feelings of the people. They are not generally left open all day, as in Roman Catholic countries, and the fixed services do not seem very attractive. It is said, however, that the priests have great hold on the people, and that there is much low superstition. I took an opportunity that occurred in a small village of rather a better kind in the Banat, near the Military frontier, to visit and make acquaintance with a priest and examine his church. There was no objection made to my seeing every part of the building, and all questions were answered very freely.

The Greek Church priests in Hungary, as in Russia, are almost always of the peasant class. The clergyman of a village is some young man of the neighbourhood, who, knowing very imperfectly the elements of reading and writing, has qualified himself to add to his daily earnings the very small emoluments of an officiating minister of his Church. Not much of his time is thus occupied, but there are two drawbacks that some might consider serious, and that no doubt interfere to prevent much competition. One is, that the priest must be married, and may not marry more than once. It is well known that the priesthood of the Greek Church is everywhere strictly monogamist. The other drawback is more serious. It is the absolute necessity of keeping, in all their strictness, the wonderful fasts of the church. During the whole of Lent, not one particle of meat or of animal food of any kind whatever—such as fish, eggs, butter, &c.—must pass the lips of the priest. He must live in the village, on the coarsest dry bread, made of Indian-corn flour and water, and the supply of this is limited, both in the time of the meals, and, I believe, in the quantity of the food. To people who generally eat meat, and who really work, this privation must be serious.

I have said that the priest works. He does so as a day labourer, or he farms his own little bit of glebe; or, if provided with pecuniary resources, he undertakes little speculations, such as becoming a carrier between his village and the nearest town. The only provision usually made for him is the glebe, which is

in some proportion to the population he has to serve, and is provided by the feudal lord, who also builds, and keeps in such repair as he may please, the village church.

The priest I visited was of the ordinary kind, neither better nor worse than a score that might be turned out of the nearest five-and-twenty villages. The village was rather large and neat, and the exterior of the church superior to many. It was plain, neat, simple in style, and whitewashed. It consisted of a barn-shaped building, at one end of which was a small tower and spire, a flat cupola intervening between the spire and tower, much in the form one is accustomed to see in churches on the Danube. The interior I will describe presently. The church was in some respects far superior to many, inasmuch as it stood in a detached piece of ground, enclosed and kept locked. There was also a school. The church being closed, I proceeded with my travelling companion (a native of the village, but of the better class) to the habitation of the priest.

We found his house very readily—it was a few hundred yards from the church, and about equal to the other houses of the village. There was an outer gate to the court, from which some children and horses were trooping through the mud when we came in sight. As is often the case, there was a stone gateway and rather formal entry, but the fence on either side was much easier of access. We went in, however, by the gate, and came into the usual square

court, with a wooden house on one side, its gable end towards the road, and sheds round two sides. The court presented a curious mixture of poultry and old carts, pigs and broken cart-wheels, horses and children, all half-buried in black mud. We turned to the house, and entered. There was the usual dark hall, only lighted when the outer door was open, and there we saw a peasant woman with the smallest amount of costume that even Wallachian habits recognize (that of Eve herself, after the Fall, not being much simpler), engaged in some culinary occupation. The whole place was so black with dirt and smoke—the cooking being carried on by an open wood fire without chimney—that we could see but little. On saying that we wished to see the priest, we were ushered into the principal of the two rooms of the house, and asked to wait a little. The room was small, but had in each of three of the corners a wooden bedstead of the roughest kind. One had a loose straw mattress on it, with one or two old coats of undressed sheepskin, such as are worn by the peasants; the others were bare. There were also two very rough benches, a chair equally rough, and a chest of drawers. One or two small daubs, representing Greek Church ideas of saints, in Chinese perspective, were hanging on the walls, but there was no other furniture of any kind. I especially noticed the absence of any apparatus for washing.

After waiting for some time, the priest appeared, evidently unprepared for a mere visit of curiosity. He

was a young, handsome fellow, with dark copper-coloured skin, probably much bronzed by exposure, long, silky, black hair flowing over his shoulders, and long, silky moustaches, also of the deepest and glossiest black. He was dressed in a white blouse, extremely dirty, and trousers whose original whiteness was even more masked by dirt than that of the blouse. His feet and legs were quite bare, and his head was also uncovered. On being informed by my companion, in the Romanish language (that of all the peasants in the neighbourhood), that a distinguished foreigner from England desired to honour his church by examining its interior, he begged permission to retire for a while. He re-appeared soon with a pair of Wellington boots, into which the legs of the trousers were tucked. He had also put on a white waistcoat, which, however, was left quite unbuttoned, and a very broad-brimmed felt hat was in his hand. He was then in proper costume to accompany us to the church, of which he had the key in his hand. Although at first he only spoke in his own language, and our conversation passed through an interpreter, I found, after a time, that he not only understood but could speak German, but was rather shy of parading such knowledge. His manners were good and pleasant, and without the slightest affectation. It would have been quite impossible to discover any indication of his office from any peculiarity of dress, manner or appearance.

The inside of the church, as is generally the case with those of the Greek persuasion, was very bare,

and without the smallest division into aisles. It was also without any seats in the middle. It was divided by two screens into three parts. The screen to the east was of iron, and much the most elaborate. It entirely concealed the altar, which, however, differed little in appearance and ornament from that of a Roman Catholic church. Between the two screens there were seats or stalls against the wall, those nearest the altar-screen projecting forwards, and being altogether distinct: one was intended for the bishop. There was also a reading-desk and a place for the choir. With these exceptions, the floor was unoccupied, and entirely without benches or chairs. The books of the service were in the old Romaic character, a curious mixture of Greek and Slavonic, nearly incomprehensible to me. This character is not used much in modern printed books, but is always found in inscriptions and also in books of any antiquity.

The portion of the church behind the altar-screen (corresponding with the choir in our churches) appeared to be used partly as a vestry, and partly for the performance of some services out of sight. The various vestments were hanging up behind the screen, and there was no attempt at order or arrangement. There was a table used for registry and other purposes where writing is required. The altar was prepared for use, with candlesticks, &c., but without decoration, and the whole affair seemed as little effective as possible. None but the priests are in this part of the church during service, and the reading of the Scriptures is

conducted at a desk in the body of the church in sight of the congregation.

The screen at the end opposite the altar was low and incomplete. Behind it was a miscellaneous collection of banners and other apparatus for processions, and various odds and ends for church purposes. Here, also, everything was disorderly and dirty. Several pictures in frames were placed here, and these are put out on stands or easels when service is performed, for the worship of the people. They were mere faces, with a background of gilding.

The walls of the central part of the building I observed to be decorated by pictures, painted in fresco, in imitation panels. These frescoes represent, with a rude attempt at perspective, some of the events of our Saviour's life, and the history of certain favourite saints. They were modern, and not worse than similar works in Roman Catholic parish churches in country villages in France and Germany.*

The priests bear but an indifferent character. They occupy themselves in various ways, and among the rest are accused of sometimes appropriating property not belonging to them, when admitted into the better class of houses. They are said, also, to have a powerful influence over their female parishioners, and to use it occasionally for improper purposes. Few of them are

* Mr. Paget, in his Hungary and Transylvania, notices that the subjects of these church pictures in some parts of Hungary are more free than decorous. I did not notice this in any of the modern churches that I visited.

more educated than is necessary to enable them to read with difficulty the necessary services, and make such records as the law requires.

Wherever the religion of the Greek Church prevails, the old reckoning of time remains, as the change introduced by a Roman Catholic Pope has never been accepted by his religious rivals. There is thus a great difference in the reckoning of the various festivals of the church, and much confusion is introduced in all calculations of dates.

CHAPTER VII.

The Valley of Hátzeg and the Pass of the Iron Gate.—The Dacians and Romans.—Ancient Roman Cities in Transylvania.—The Plague of Insects.

FROM the Zsil valley to the valley of the Strehl by the higher pass, opposite Vulkan, is a route of considerable interest, as it crosses the watershed of the Carpathians over a comparatively low granitic axis, parallel to the main chain, which is here on the south side of the Zsil valley, at a distance of several miles. The scenery is rocky and fine, and from the top of the pass a noble view is obtained of the valley of the Strehl, and of the lower pass into the Zsil, some miles to the east. The descent to the Strehl is easy, and the town of Hátzeg is reached after a few hours' rumbling over an indifferent road. This road is the same as that traversed a week previously on my journey to the coal-field.

The valley of Hátzeg is, in some respects, one of the most interesting parts of Transylvania. The whole of this district was occupied in ancient times by a half-civilized people, who, with some success and under the name of the Getæ, obstructed the passage of the Danube by Alexander the Great, and afterwards defeated Lysimachus, King of Thrace. Under the name

of Dacians (assumed at a later period), the same people overran Northern Italy, and even threatened Rome itself, exacting tribute from Domitian, as an inducement to withhold further advance. About the commencement of the Christian era, however, Trajan, to redeem this disgrace—acutely felt by a people then so warlike and powerful as the Romans—prepared an expedition against them, which he led in person. He defeated them with great slaughter, reducing their king, Decebalus, to make peace under very humiliating conditions. These conditions the Dacian prince broke as soon as he saw a favourable opportunity, but he was severely punished for his want of good faith. Crossing the Danube at a convenient place, near Orsova, the Roman Emperor, once more at the head of his legions, conducted them through the country by Mehadia and Karansebes, through the pass of the Iron Gate, and so to the entrance of the Valley of Hátzeg. At this point was situated one of the largest and most important of the Dacian cities, *Sarmisegethusa*, some remains of which exist to this day. The Dacians were again defeated, their king slain, and the valley was permanently occupied by the Romans. The whole country was, before long, converted into a Roman province, and roads were made communicating from one settlement to another. This conquest over the Dacians was regarded as so important that one of the most remarkable monuments of modern Rome—the celebrated Trajan's column, the original of so many copies—was erected in memory of it, and the events of

the war are recorded there in imperishable bronze. Even to this day the physiognomy of the Wallachian peasants of the valley, the descendants of the conquered people, may be easily recognized as absolutely identical with that of the figures sculptured on the column, representing their ancestors, the resemblance being no less striking than has often been observed with Egyptian hieroglyphics of much more ancient date, where the prevailing Negro types are marked and contrasted with the Egyptian and European races. It is certainly singular that the Dacians also have so little changed in nearly two thousand years.

The interest of the Hátzeg Valley, and of the passage through the Iron Gate into the present Military frontier of the Banat, is thus very great in an historical sense, and much has been written on the subject. The actual history of the war, however, and of the people conquered, has never yet been prepared by anyone conversant with the localities. They are not very accessible, even at the present time, though much more so than formerly, but a few days might now be spent with advantage between Hátzeg and Karansebes, since in both places there is fair accommodation for a traveller who is not too particular. Between the two there is little chance of obtaining a night's shelter, and the distance is too considerable to allow of a thorough examination of the principal points in one day's journey. The roads, in favourable weather, are by no means bad, but in winter, or after recent heavy rain, they would not be passable.

Of the town of Hátzeg there is little to be said. Its position in the valley is pleasing, but not remarkable, and none of its buildings offer any peculiarity worthy of notice. Some of the houses are of a larger and better kind than one would expect, and the intervals between the houses induce an appearance of magnitude, which the population returns would probably hardly warrant.

The valley along which the road is conducted is wide and open, and is cultivated chiefly with maize. The stream running through it is inconsiderable at ordinary seasons, and the mountains, though gradually diminishing in elevation, are covered thickly with forest. Many low hills interrupt the plain, and numerous cottages and country houses are sprinkled over it, giving an appearance of life very agreeable to the eye.

The last village in the plain is Várhely (Gradistie of the Wallachs), on the site of the ancient Sarmisegethusa,* the capital of the old Dacians in the days of their splendour, and the seat of empire of their last king, Decebalus. On the ruins of the Dacian city, the Romans, after the conquest of the country, built a city called Ulpia Trajana, intended by Trajan as the capital of his Transdanubian empire. That the Da-

* This name is said to date from the time of Alexander, when Sarmis, the king at that time, built or founded the first town. Afterwards, the place became very rich, and the treasures of a Grecian camp, including an incredible multitude of gold coins, seem to have found their way into the hands of the Dacian kings, and were long preserved by them.

cians, however, were previously established here in great strength, and with vast wealth, is certain, for at various intervals, up to a very recent date, gold coins of Greek origin, generally Thracian, have been dug up and appropriated. During the present century, a priest suddenly disappeared from the neighbourhood, and after some time turned up again in Wallachia, possessed of very great wealth, derived from a discovery of this kind.

In the year 1545, many thousand coins are said to have been found by accident and appropriated in a similar way. Ancient coins are even now in frequent use among the neighbouring population for signet rings and other ornaments. They are often smuggled across the Wallachian frontier in loaves of bread. Copper coins, chiefly Roman, are so common that the children of the village offer them for a mere trifle to every stranger who passes through.

There is something very touching in wandering among the ruins of the old cities in this wild and little-visited part of Europe. We look back through the successive periods of history, and seem able to connect the present population with civilized races of a period perhaps more ancient than that of any other north European people. It is not unlikely that these rich valleys of the Danube and Theiss, with the adjacent mountain fastnesses, had been long settled, and were already powerful and warlike when Homer sang. Perhaps, even when the histories he told were in course of performance, there were other events of equal

importance here being carried on, though not fated to be immortalized by the poet. Here came the old Thracians, battling with the older race that had been settled here before them. There are, indeed, no records of these people beyond the rude and costly ornaments occasionally dug up; but they are known to have been powerful, for they occasionally overcame the countries to the south, and they were dreaded even as far as the gates of Rome.

Nor did this warlike people suddenly cease to exist. They resisted long and effectually the attacks of their more-civilized enemies in the south-east, and continued to hold their own as a distinct people, till they had so far roused the fears of Rome as to make it necessary that one of the two peoples should be defeated and their country permanently occupied by the other. Then, indeed, the great mistress of the world was able to meet in battle and destroy the determined and powerful enemies who had so often threatened Rome. These Dacians were then rich with spoils of Greece. They dwelt in powerful fenced cities; they mustered large armies, and they cultivated rich lands. But they could no more resist the combined and overwhelming force of Rome than the Carthaginians or others of the ancient independent nations, and their country became ultimately swallowed up in the vast empire not long before its final collapse.

The Romans did their work in earnest, and they did it thoroughly; they destroyed the people; and as for the chief town, they literally seem not to have left one stone

upon another. The new Roman city replaced the old Dacian metropolis.

Little now remains of the Roman and much less of the Dacian city, but the whole country around, for a considerable distance, bears marks of ancient buildings, which it will still take very many centuries to efface. The neighbouring cornfields are divided into strips by long and wide heaps of brick and stone, collected together after being turned up with the plough. Among these it is not uncommon to find Roman bricks, sculptured stones, tesseræ, and coins. Very fair indications remain of the Roman amphitheatre, which, though not large,* seems to have been very well constructed, and within the village are some mosaic floors still in good preservation. These were probably the floors of baths, but other fragments have been found of larger buildings. The whole neighbourhood is strewed with broken shafts of columns of marble and other stone, and numerous capitals of columns, some of very beautiful design, are used as supports in the various houses and other buildings. It is worthy of remark, that the mosaic work is among the best that is known, having been evidently designed and executed by excellent artists. Beautiful sculptured heads and other works of art have been obtained, from time to time, but they have, for the most part, not reached any public collection. A few are in the National Museum at Pesth.

* Its dimensions are said, by Mr. Paget, to be 75 yards by 45. It is an oval.

There is a legendary account of the flight of Decebalus, with enormous treasures, across the passes into the Zsil Valley and thence into Wallachia, after the defeat he had sustained at the battle fought with the Romans near Sarmisegethusa. Another and more probable story is that the King was slain, and the treasures, after being concealed in the bed of a brook, were found by Trajan. The actual treasures themselves are thought to be referred to in the delineations on Trajan's column in Rome. This latter view is rendered probable by the fact that the coins discovered in the sixteenth century were found in the bed of this same brook.

Some buildings, apparently Roman, have been made out in the fields between the modern village and the amphitheatre; a surrounding ditch and mound, and the vaulting of old chambers, is all that can be clearly traced. Fragments of an aqueduct have also been found. On nearing the village the stranger is accosted by a parcel of children anxious to sell the fragments of mosaic-work apparently turned up everywhere.

Other Roman remains are found at Demsus, at a small distance from Várhely. These are even more perfect, though not very numerous. It is not unlikely that a systematic search would be well repaid. Nothing of the kind, at any rate, has yet been attempted, but most of the squared stones that have been turned up were long since appropriated to the construction of the modern houses and hovels.

The distance of the ancient Dacian city from the pass

is not great, and the rise towards the top is gradual, the road passing through forests, and not offering anything remarkable beyond its picturesque beauty. It is only in a military sense that the word pass is properly applicable to this road, for it offers no difficulty to the ordinary traveller, and is not elevated. It is said to owe its special name to the former existence of a real gate of iron placed at the narrowest part of the road by the Romans at the time of their permanent occupation of the country, but no traces now exist of this gate. It is singular, however, that three of the entries made by the Romans into Dacia at the time of the conquest were designated by the same name “Iron Gate,” and that in each case the name is preserved to the present day.

The view from the top of the pass into Hungary is by no means strikingly beautiful. The hills extending for a long distance, appear to diminish in importance and die away into the plain. They are bare in the vicinity, but more varied beyond, while the rich plains of the Banat are hardly visible, and except when the corn is ripe they add little to the beauty. Hungary contrasts in this respect with the broken valley just passed. The numerous dark recesses to the south and east carry the eye to the Carpathian mountains, whose tops are covered with snow, or have been so recently bared as to retain a grand and wild aspect. These are finer than anything visible on the opposite and more richly cultivated side.

From the Iron Gate we descend to a valley opening

out to the west, watered by the Bisztra. The valley is not wide, being shut in by hills of moderate elevation, seen on approaching them to be much more thickly wooded than appears from the top of the pass. They are the spurs of the Carpathians, gradually lowering as they recede from the principal mountains.

A marked change takes place in the country and people on descending into the valley and approaching the plains of the Banat. The Military frontier is now entered, and the villages are both more systematic and better constructed than in the Siebenbürgen. The people also have a somewhat different air, derived, no doubt, from their military education.

While the vicinity of the great plains ensures a more careful cultivation, and the soil becomes richer, yielding more valuable returns for agricultural labour, there are certain drawbacks introduced, of no slight importance in estimating the value of the country. Among these must be ranked the plague of insects. Few places in Europe are more exposed to this annoyance than the part of Hungary we are now approaching.

Although my visit was in the month of May, before most of the insects had fairly established themselves as nuisances, I soon heard of the prospect of terrible suffering from the locusts that were already hatched, and was made to appreciate the reality of the celebrated fly which all writers on Hungary have noticed, and which is perhaps only excelled by the *tsetse* of South Africa. Of the locusts, I saw nothing, but heard much. The experiences of my companions were varied and

extensive, and all spoke of attacks so serious, and on a scale so gigantic, that the stories could only be matched by the terrible statements of which we have all heard and read when these singular animals appear in Arabia or Palestine, and devastate now, as in ancient times, the land of Israel, or the plains of Egypt. An army of locusts really darkening the air :—a swarm of locusts clearing away every living form of green vegetable matter above the ground, and then falling on the ground in heaps that threaten to create a pestilence before they can be cleared :—locusts in such multitude that it is necessary to stop them by firing large tracts, and provide for their carcasses by digging wide and deep trenches—these are the accounts given. How far they were true in detail I could not of course judge, but no statement seemed sufficiently highly coloured to induce hesitation on the part of any person inhabiting the district. The subject was evidently one of intense interest, and great alarm was experienced for the crops of the present season.

The fly called the *Golumbatzer Mücken*, or *Golumbat-schi*, receives its name from a popular tradition that it is hatched in a certain cavern on the Danube in which the veritable St. George slew the dragon which figures in so many nationalities of Europe, and which we ourselves occasionally claim as our own. However the locality of the saint and his enemy may be ultimately decided, and whether the destruction took place on the Danube or elsewhere, the resulting fly is happily confined to a narrow district, but within these limits is hardly less

mischievous than the *tsetse* itself. It is by no means a mosquito as has sometimes been said, but more resembles the common house-fly. It is, however, much smaller, and the body is of a brighter black. The peculiarities of the *Golumbatshi* are, first—that it swarms in certain places in such incredible multitudes as positively to darken the air and impede respiration, while at a short distance off there are comparatively few; secondly, that it annoys men chiefly by swarming about them, while it drives animals mad by the irritation it produces in all the tender undefended parts of the body; thirdly, that it appears not to range beyond a fixed area, and particular seasons of the year. So large are the flights of these insects, that in driving through them it is necessary to take precautions to avoid their entering the mouth and nostrils. When they do enter the taste is said to be distinctly sweet, but I was able to avoid a personal experience on a subject so little agreeable.* Many instances occur every season of persons becoming choked by this fly being taken into the air passages of the throat during inspiration. Even incessant smoking—which, to do them justice, is resorted to with wonderful pertinacity by the Hungarians of all classes—is insufficient to keep back these nuisances.

But to the cattle the annoyance is infinitely greater.

* It is curious that the taste of insects varies so distinctly. It is well known that the ant is so distinctly acid that vinegar is made, in Norway, from it. The sweeteness of the Golumbatshi is said to be unmistakable.

The oxen seem the most attractive, for wherever they are the swarms are thickest. If left without their only defence—the smoke of green wood—the animals are sometimes fairly driven out of their senses, and they rush away in any direction at full speed, to escape, if possible, and, if not, to destroy themselves. More usually, a fire being lighted a little to windward of a convenient station, the oxen resort to the smoke whenever they need it, and the enemy is kept at bay.

It is curious, and at first rather strange, to see the multitude of little curling columns of blue smoke in every direction, either in the open fields or marking the line of a frequented road. It is more curious still to see the patient animals, after their labour, collect together and stand within range of the friendly vapour, sensible that in this way only they can escape from their minute, but most annoying, foes.

Horses, as being the more excitable animals, suffer more and exhibit their sufferings more plainly than cattle. I have seen the third, or comparatively loose horse of a team, attached to the cart I was riding in, throw himself violently on the ground while harnessed, and endeavour to roll over in the dust. There is no limit to the mischief that might be done, and there seems really no escape after the season has once commenced. These flies were already so numerous at the time of my visit, in the month of May, that I was able to verify all that had been written about them, and I am told they last till autumn. It is indeed for-

tunate that they are not only local but occasional and partial visitors.

But the locusts, after all, are much more serious than the flies. If the latter occasionally drive the cattle and horses in wild confusion over the plains, the former actually devour the growing crops, and leave little or nothing of any sort behind them. These are thus terrible drawbacks to the use of the vast natural wealth of this part of Europe, and nature's usual balance is well kept up between growth and destruction. There is no defence against the locust when its flight has once commenced. As to the Columbatschi, by greasing over the horses, and taking care that the grease or tar is repeated often enough, the most serious attacks may be prevented, while the fire carefully lighted and constantly kept up is a means by which the oxen can always be kept together.

Down the valley of the Bisztra, to its junction with the Temes, there is a good road, which is continued to the town of Lugos and thence to Temesvar,* a station on the main line of railway. Avoiding this, I turned off at some distance from the Iron Gate, and made my way to Karansebes, a town of some interest, towards the south-west, well situated in the rich valley of the Temes. The road is perfectly practicable in fine weather, but after heavy rains, and in bad weather, is

* There is a direct road from Temesvar by Lugos to the Iron Gate Pass, and so by the valley of the Strehl to Hermannstadt. The Town of Temesvar is on the main line of railway from Vienna.

not to be recommended. It could not, in fact, be travelled over. Without offering much of positive beauty, there are so many points of interest to be seen, in crossing the rolling country, that one is not fatigued or annoyed by the roughness of the road. The hills are not lofty, nor are they wooded very extensively, but they offer a pleasing variety of forest and cultivated land. The mountains are distant and form no important feature.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ruskberg and Ruskitza.—The Iron Mines, Marble Quarries, and Lead Mines of the Zsamina.—Beech Forests and Charcoal-burners.—Lunkany.—Its Orcs and Hydropathic Establishment.

To see a country, it is necessary to diverge from high roads and dive into districts perhaps never heard of before, and only remarkable as illustrating minute details of customs and scenery. When the object that carries one to a new country requires this, it is a piece of good fortune to be taken full advantage of. When this is not the case, one must go out of one's way for the chance of finding new material. It may be that if I had not been about to visit the valleys near the Iron Gate, for the special purpose of examining certain sources of mineral wealth, I should have selected another line of country that might not have been so interesting or instructive.

The Zsamina is one of the principal valleys opening into the Bisztra, from the north, near the Iron Gate. It is a narrow crevice, or fissure, rather than a true valley, formed between hills of moderate elevation, generally covered with thick forest, and at intervals, where the width is sufficient, there are houses and small villages. A considerable stream of water comes down

it, and enters the Bisztra. Several miles up this valley, is the long and very picturesque town of Ruskberg, situated at the junction of another valley, smaller and narrower than the Zsamina, equally well wooded, and with still less space for houses between the hills. These valleys are mere clefts in table land, but have a certain importance from the fact of mineral wealth existing among them to some extent. Thus, in the main valley a little above Ruskberg are veins of lead, and abundant stores of iron ore, besides marble and other useful materials. In the little subsidiary valley just alluded to, is a bed of coal, and in both are works of various kinds constructed to make use of these minerals.

The coal of this district is worked among the deepest recesses of the mountain and forest. Toiling along uphill, along a bad road, although fortunately with a very good horse, and in a comfortable *char-à-banc*, more than an hour and a half was occupied after leaving Ruskberg, before reaching the place where the works are carried on. Except a few cottages, quite uninhabited, but recently built—a colony prepared for but not established—there are no human habitations to be seen after passing the hammer-work, a little above Ruskberg. A few carts, loaded with the coal, were met coming down to the valley, but with this exception, the silence was only disturbed by our own wheels. At last we reached the coal-workings, and a more deserted, melancholy-looking place for a mine, I have never seen. A sandstone, inclined at a high angle to the horizon, rested on a coarse, rotten, blackish-

green rock, broken up into round balls where exposed to weather. A poor, rotten seam of coal rested on this, and was covered by another sandstone. A less-promising development of mineral fuel it would be difficult to find in any country, but, poor as it seems, this coal was thought worth working, and a gallery or tunnel had been driven a quarter of a mile into the hill, enabling the speculators to remove a certain quantity of mineral. I could not learn that it was much in favour, though it could be used by the smith, and had been tried repeatedly in puddling furnaces at a distance, for iron manufacture. So wild and desolate was the appearance of the place, that we had some difficulty in finding the exact spot where the workings were carried on, though the road led to nothing else. It seemed curious that a little coal-field should thus be opened at such a distance from a market, in a place so overgrown with forest as to show no other break than that made to remove the mineral, and that all this trouble should be taken for a substance so small in quantity and so very poor in quality as the dirty stones we went to see. There are, however, properties even in very bad mineral fuel, that fit it for purposes for which wood and charcoal are imperfectly adapted. The dirty stones in question were carried fifteen or twenty miles, and could there be sold at some profit, and thus the work went on. Certainly, the owner would not make his fortune, but he might earn a scanty profit on a very small outlay.*

* It is a geological fact of some interest, that this coal

This winding cleft in the rocks is called the Losna Csora, and, even at its best, is only just large enough to allow of a narrow road alongside the stream that runs through it. As in all mountain districts, the stream is treacherous—sometimes a mere rill, it becomes suddenly swollen and rushes down as a torrent. There is, however, generally water enough in it to drive a few wheels near the opening into the Zsamina, and at this point are two or three small hammer-works.

Ruskberg is a continuous series of pretty white-looking houses and many poorer habitations, extending for more than a mile, wherever there is a space between the foot of the steep hills on the right bank of the Zsamina and the road, which here runs close to the water. Sometimes the houses are on one side only, sometimes on both sides, of the little river, and occasionally there is room for a few between the road and the stream. Amongst the houses are other buildings—here a saw-mill—there a little hammer-work, with a waterwheel clacking and pounding incessantly, and helping to bring into bars and rods the iron smelted in the mountains. The trees come down quite to the backs of the houses, and interfere with the gardens, where room is found for such luxuries, and the form of the little town is strictly governed by these natural limits of space. Shut in in this manner, the in-

belongs to the period of our chalk, which, in the east of Europe, occupies mountain tracts, and is very different in appearance from anything we are accustomed to. Black sandstones are its representatives at this point.

habitants are apt to complain that they are cut off from the world, and as the only road through the valley leads from the Bisztra valley, near the Iron Gate, over a high ridge, into another valley yet narrower and more dull than that of the Zsamina, the complaint is not without reason. The wonder certainly is, that in such a valley there should ever have been planted so considerable a town as Ruskberg. There is, however, a good deal of mineral wealth in the hills beyond, and this has been long cultivated.

Ruskberg, in spite of its social dullness, has several very good-sized, new-looking, and well-built houses, a handsome church rising and nearly completed, and a very fair inn. The latter establishment is extremely well supplied with the most important requirements of the traveller—food and sleeping accommodation, excellent beer and wine, and a very reasonable amount of cleanliness. The town has the appearance of being a very flourishing place. Just outside, at the end opposite the hammer-works and the coal valley, are some large works recently erected for reducing lead and silver-lead ores found in the neighbourhood, and not far off is a kind of shot tower, so that there are many and varied industries.

The population here is chiefly Hungarian, mixed with a marked proportion of Wallachs, employed in the various works going on. Few Hungarians are in the iron or lead works—few are employed as labourers in building the church. This kind of labour is not to the taste of the Magyar. His Oriental blood does not stir

him to any rivalry with these workers, and he looks on, allowing work to be done, rather than helping to do it.

From Ruskberg up the valley to Ruskitza is a charming drive. Immediately above the town, after leaving the lead-works and the house of the director of the iron-works, we come to the shot tower, situated in a spot so romantic that it certainly deserves the attention of the artist. The mountains close in, and almost vertical cliffs rise on each side the narrow valley, which has barely width enough for the narrow road and the bed of the stream. The rocky cliffs of limestone are extremely broken, and from every ledge and crevice starts forth some tree or plant, leaving only the gray rock as a background. Where the cliff is most vertical, a wooden shoot, consisting of a box or pipe 150 feet long, made of rough deals, has been attached to the naked limestone rock, apparently by some other hand than that of man. Nothing is seen at the top, and the box is open below. This is the shot tower, almost the only one in Hungary a few years ago, and its use is to allow the molten lead, reduced to a proper state in a furnace, to be thrown down into a basin in the brook below. By this means it obtains the form and hardness necessary for the purposes for which the shot is required.

Between Ruskberg and Ruskitza, the valley is narrow and the forest closes on the road. The stream also becomes smaller, but there are several side valleys, one of which brings down stones of rich iron ore, valuable

enough to be worth washing by a little apparatus. The washed ore is used at Ruskitza, where there is a rather large iron establishment, fed chiefly by ores obtained somewhat higher up among the mountains at Ruski. The appearance of the high furnaces, casting-house, and mill, at this wild spot, far from any cultivation, and apparently out of the way of everything, is at first rather surprising. The road is good all the way to the works, and on reaching them a little colony is seen, with a respectable house for the manager and his family. It seemed a sad banishment to the pleasant, quiet wife of the gentleman who superintended the foundry, to be shut in here with no companion but her little daughter; rarely able even to get so far as Ruskberg, and with no chance of seeing a population of greater importance without a serious and costly journey. I remarked to this lady, how pleasantly situated her house was, and how picturesquely the valley opened in the neighbourhood of the works; and was answered by an acknowledgment of the advantages, but an intimation also, that in winter there were long evenings and dull days when the heavy snow prevented even the little excursions that the neighbourhood could afford, and when the beauty of the scenery was but a poor substitute for human associations.

The winter, indeed, in these parts of Europe, and especially in the mountains, is both long and severe. During many weeks, communication is quite cut off on one side of the valley, and greatly impeded on the other. There is only one road through the valley, and if that

is closed each village is left entirely to its own resources. During the severe winter of 1861-2, many weeks elapsed without the possibility of crossing the mountains ; and this is no extraordinary event. Still, the valley is a pleasant place, and where it opens out into a flat, as it does occasionally, there is good cultivable land.

A terrible and destructive fire took place at the mill at Ruskitzza, during the past winter. While the frost was hard, and everything covered with snow, the great building, containing a number of furnaces and hammers, was burnt to the ground, and property of much value destroyed. It has not yet been rebuilt, and the ruins do not add to the cheerfulness of the scene. A vast multitude of stoves, lying heaped on the ground, and piled one above another, over a large space, mark the principal manufacture, and the nature of the casting for which there is the largest demand. These stoves are sent great distances ; they are not very expensive, and I expect they do not last very long. They are small and very plain, quite unlike the elaborate contrivances common in Germany. Except in stoves, there seemed little doing, but I was told that during spring and summer they had to be manufactured as fast as possible to meet the demand commencing with each autumn.

The high furnaces at Ruskitzza are supplied with ore chiefly from a very gigantic vein of iron ore in the mountains at a little distance. This vein is close to a noble vein of white marble, opened to extract stone to build the church at Ruskberg. It is also near a rich

silver-lead vein. The iron vein is best seen close to the top of the mountain of Ruski, and is interesting enough. Large and fine stones of the magnetic ore, forming natural magnets, are very common. These, if suspended, would act as magnets, having strong polarity. A little lower down, however, and where the chief works are carried on, the magnetic ore gives place to a poorer but still valuable oxide, mixed with and cemented by silica. The richer kinds of ore—natural magnets—when in sufficient quantity, produce, on being melted with charcoal, some of the purest and most valuable kinds of iron, especially valuable for making steel. The great masses of ore are, however, of other kinds: —they are oxides, but mixed with carbonates, and resembling in some respects impure limestone. Of such ore the quantity is indefinite, and the quality good. It is quarried in several stages of open-air works by a large number of hands, at two or three points, and there is also a tunnel driven through the vein, connecting open works on opposite sides of a mountain. The scenery in this part of the mountain is very grand, for the works are on a large scale, and the forest, elsewhere thick and composed of lofty trees, is much bared. There is no road, except to the various quarries of ore, but the number of loaded carts descending, and the empty ones slowly creeping towards the mines, give some animation to the district.

A path up a small gorge, leading to the open works, passes the white marble quarry already alluded to. It is an extremely beautiful pure white stone, breaking

with a fracture like that of fine loaf-sugar. Large blocks can be obtained. It is, however, heavy and too hard for the sculptor's chisel to cut with facility. It occurs in a kind of vein, lower down the hill than the iron deposit ; and other somewhat similar, but inferior building material, also a kind of marble, exists in abundance in the neighbourhood.

A remarkable and rich vein of silver-lead ore is opened very near the vein of iron ore. The supply obtained is tolerably abundant, and the produce good. The ores have generally been carried to Ruskberg for reduction. They have helped to supply the lead works there, and the metal, when reduced and separated from the silver, has been converted into shot at the tower.

Returning through the forest, down the steep mountain slope, to the point where we had left our carriages, we soon commenced the ascent of the mountain side. It was a grand and wild scene. Tens of thousands of acres of forest land, the greater part of which has not yet resounded to the stroke of the axe, cover the summits of these noble hills. Advancing through them, and mounting gradually to a considerable height, the groups of beech—at first the only trees in the forest—are sparingly mixed with pines and firs. I have rarely seen more noble specimens, either of single or twin trees, than here abound. Straight spars rising without a branch to a vast height, are so common, that trees of ordinary size and proportions are quite exceptional.

But the forest is not all untrodden. In many parts we find traces of the charcoal-burner. His conical hut,

made of sticks and resembling one of the piles of wood he has prepared for burning, is seen from point to point, and it is soon evident that a very large business of this kind is carried on. The men live in the forest, sometimes alone, visiting the town below once a week during summer. Sometimes they are accompanied by their wives and families. All their supplies come from below.

The great use of the beech-wood faggots is for making charcoal for the iron-works, and as these swallow up a large quantity of fuel, the forests must necessarily be thinned when the iron industry is rapidly advancing. There is little symptom of thinning as yet in the district I am now alluding to.

A drive through thick forest can hardly fail to be interesting. There is, at least to one accustomed to town life, a wonderful charm in the perfect solitude of a vast forest; and when the only persons one is likely to meet during many hours' drive are the charcoal-burners at their vocation, and the only signs of human influence are the occasional fallen tree and the black burning heap close to the roadside, the effect is rather heightened than otherwise. They are a strange, gloomy, solitary race, these charcoal-burners, and seem to have nothing to do with ordinary humanity. During the whole of the summer they live alone in the forest, hardly ever seeing a human being of any kind, except those associates who are engaged in carting the manufactured fuel. They very rarely visit the town, or wander many hours from the place of their work.

They select some place where water is to be had, and near it build a small hut. If their wives are with them—which is not often the case—the woman goes once a week for the maize bread, which is their principal food. Otherwise, it is brought in the return trips of the carts.

As the paths from the main road to the places where the trees are felled are rarely good, and often nearly impassable, the pile is often placed close to the road; but as the road is hardly ever used except for the conveyance of the charcoal, this vicinity does not add much to the liveliness of the situation.

The men generally undertake the work at a fixed price per cubic fathom of charcoal delivered. They can thus earn little or much, according to their fancy, and if they please can lay by profits for winter use. It is said, however, that when the snows begin and no more work can be done on the mountains, they descend into the nearest town or village and there hibernate, living as long as they can a mere animal existence of drinking and sleeping. All that remains of the profits of the past season is then swallowed up, and a debt often incurred, to be paid off in the next spring. The people thus employed are, not only in Hungary but almost everywhere, a marked race, and regarded as a sort of outcasts from ordinary peasant society.

The quantity of charcoal made in the forests near Ruski must be very large, as the burners are closer together than usual, and range over many square miles of country. The quality is also excellent, the wood

being entirely beech, and generally large and round. It seems a pity to devote such noble trees as we there see to the fire, but the cost of transport to any market would be far too great to justify any other use. I did not hear of any of that ingenious carving that one sees in the Tyrol and some other forest districts. Beech is, however, hardly fitted for such operations. It is the wood chiefly employed for common furniture in Venice and Pesth, but there is much of this wood everywhere, and the supply is so large that a considerable waste seems pardonable.

After a long and steady pull with four horses to our carriage and an active driver, we at length reached the crest of the hill, or rather mountain. At this elevation (amounting to three or four thousand feet at least) the beech had given place to the fir, and picturesque trees of that kind stood thickly on the summit and slopes of the mountains on both sides. Very noble, lofty, and well-grown trees are here common, and the proportion of poor dwarfed or young trees is not large. The view, though fine, was confined to the boundless expanse of forest. Far down on both sides a little serpent-like line might be recognized, marking the narrow gap made by cutting the trees in the preparation of the road we had traversed or were about to follow. As the road on both sides is in zigzag, only small parts could be seen at once, and these fitful markings did not take away from the sublimity arising from the character of the vegetation. The season being spring, the contrast of colour between the exceedingly pale, deli-

cate tint of the beech foliage, and the sombre blackness of the firs, was strongly marked. The colour marked also the limits of height, for the fir does not penetrate far down the mountain side, although the beech in sheltered places rises nearly or quite to the top. Although, on the whole, unbroken by any important valley, there are sufficient small ravines and gorges to give variety to the shading, and due effect to the other elements of wild uncultivated beauty that prevail.

Down the zigzag towards the valley, on the other side of Ruski, the road soon once more enters the dark and thick shade, and we again meet the marks of the charcoal-burner. A drive of two or three hours conducts to a somewhat more open part of the valley, where is the small, modern settlement and old village of Lunkany (pronounced *Lun-kan*), with its one iron furnace and piles of iron ore prepared for smelting. There is nothing in the village requiring notice. The whole of the modern establishment is a colony introduced some years ago for the sake of ensuring labour at the iron-works, and the houses, church, and school, are new and of the usual style. Here again the iron industry has produced certain marks of civilization, contrasting oddly with the natural character of the valley and the old population. Few Hungarians are employed, but the manager and one or two of the principal *employés* are of that nation. There was a comfortable house and good garden, but the ladies of the household complained sadly, and certainly not without reason, of the isolation of their position. They

had not long since left a large town, and during the past winter—their first in the neighbourhood—they had been cut off from all communication for several months.

Near Lunkany is a singular deposit of iron ore lying on the surface of the ground, and requiring only to be dug out and separated from rubbish. The ore is not very rich, but the quantity would make up for this if coal were near, or if charcoal could ever be a fuel abundant enough and cheap enough to allow iron to be manufactured from it economically without other fuel. As it is, excellent pig-iron is made and sold, but the trade languishes. Inaccessible mountain valleys, far removed from towns and railways, may, and sometimes do, contain abundant mineral wealth, but till means exist for conveying it to a market, such wealth is often a source of poverty rather than what it at first seems, a great national blessing.

The land in the neighbourhood of the iron mines is by no means so fertile in appearance, and is certainly not so highly cultivated as that in the other valleys where there is less iron ore. The mountain sides are also less thickly clothed with wood. This is not unlikely to be owing to the quantity of iron present in the soil. An interesting question suggests itself to the geologist as to the meaning and origin of these large surface deposits; and one is obliged to assume that they are derived from some gigantic and very rich vein crossing the country, not far off, at a higher level.

The valley in which Lunkany is situated may be

reached from the plains of the Danube, but there is no ready or regular communication. The forest has ceased before the village is reached, and the country is not remarkable for picturesque beauty. For some reason, however, not easy to understand, a hydropathic establishment, on the same plan as those elsewhere in Germany, was started some years ago a little below the colony connected with the iron works. No mineral spring exists, and the stream is small and poor. There is no conceivable advantage of position ; extreme difficulty must have been experienced to obtain regular supplies ; and often the patients must have found it impossible to reach their destination without much loss of time. Here, however, is the little barrack in which these unhappy persons are said to have resided for a time, and the total desertion that has succeeded the partial animation of the valley makes it tenfold more desolate than it need otherwise have been.

CHAPTER IX.

Karansbes.—Road to Oravicza.—The Gold Valleys and Gold Veins.—The Oravicza Coal and Iron.—Oravicza to Baziasch.—The Banat.

FROM Lunkany I returned as I came, crossing the steep mountain, and descending through the forest to the iron-works of Ruskitzia and Rusberg, and so once more reaching to the valley of the Bisztra and the open country towards the plains, in the direction of Lugos. Several picturesque villages, and some that are very formal, are passed on this road. At length we come upon the large iron establishment at Ferdinandsberg. The works at Ferdinandsberg are convenient, and possess some local interest; but their position is not very good, their distance from fuel and iron being too great. There is a large, modern-built village or colony immediately adjacent, and two churches, almost exactly similar, are in course of construction. I was struck, here and elsewhere, with the almost invariable fact of more than one church existing in every village, and also of the modern appearance of most of the churches. On the Wallachian frontier the second church is generally of the Greek persuasion; but there are also many Lutheran Protestants, all tolerated without distinction.

A little beyond Ferdinandsberg, leaving the main road, we arrive at the town of Karansebes.

Karansebes is approached by a fine avenue of poplars, and the road near the town is well kept. It is a very neat—almost a handsome—town, with good accommodation of the ordinary kind, clean beds and capital food. There are several public buildings, and the principal street and square have a very flourishing appearance. As, however, I entered the town after dusk, and was away soon after daybreak next morning, I had not much opportunity of judging of its population or of the degree of liveliness it may present in the day. It is worth a visit as a specimen of one of the better class of towns within the Military frontier—a part of Hungary under better and longer control than many others. All the male inhabitants are here educated as soldiers, and are liable to be called out at a moment's notice for the defence of the frontier. The whole organization of the district is military. The governor is a general officer—the next in power and dignity are the captains of the companies. Each village has its own officer, and all are accustomed to work together. Military precision reigns everywhere. The streets are straight, well proportioned and clean, the houses even are built according to plan, and look towards the street—a rare accident in this part of the world. I have nowhere seen the fair side of a military organization so pleasantly exhibited as in this curious district.

There is, however, nothing new to say on a subject

already frequently described. The curious reader will find all the information he can need in Murray's Handbook and Mr. Paget's excellent work on Hungary, and I do not propose to quote from these books, even where their information, which is somewhat out of date in things that alter with time, still remains accurate.

Among the buildings in and around Karansebes, its picturesque and peculiar iron suspension bridge across the Temes, is not the least remarkable. It is a neat bridge on a somewhat new principle, and the people are with reason proud of it. It was constructed in the neighbouring works of Ruskitza. The Temes is here a considerable stream, and in winter is rather troublesome, like most of the feeders of the Danube. The churches in Karanscbes, of which there several, are modern and plain.

From Karansebes, through a fine avenue along an excellent road, and through a country studded with white houses and gardens, we advance into a district where the road dies away into a mere trace on the sands, where there is not a house within sight, and where the cultivation is reduced to a very unimportant matter without the fields becoming replaced by forests, or the plains exchanged for mountains. We pass, in fact, across a tract of sand in which are numberless stones of iron ore, into a country which is uncultivable, and through which, after heavy rain, it would be altogether impossible to drag a cart. A short distance from Karanscbes, before entering this tract, is Mika, which has been regarded by some as the place of banishment of the Latin

near Ovid. There is at Mika a small square castle, which is popularly known as Ovid's Tower, and which, according to tradition, marks the spot whence issued those plaintive laments which have charmed all subsequent lovers of sweet music. Beyond this to Prebul, there is little of interest.

Prebul is a small dull town or large dull village, in which all the houses are separated from each other by a wide interval; there is in it a decent well-built modern church, and a school. The population is chiefly Wallach, but, as usual, the inn is kept by a German family. I found this inn unusually dirty, especially the strangers' room, into which we were introduced while our horses were indulged with an hour's rest and some food. As is usual in these village inns, the bedroom is also a public sitting-room, and we found already three occupants, one of whom was a Jew, unmistakable in his long robe, his low broad-brimmed hat, and his long beard. This Jew had apparently occupied the room during the night, and the marks of his occupancy were not pleasant to observe. A tumble-down wooden box that contained the bed was half covered with a greatly-rumpled feather-bed coverlet, the sheet sewn to it as usual. Even the sheet (to say nothing of the coverlet) was so much discoloured with dirt as to suggest serious doubts as to the nature of the material of which it had originally been made. So dirty was the place, and so disagreeable was the atmosphere, although it seemed to have been exposed to a purification of smoke for some hours with closed windows, that I was obliged to retreat when asked to enter to take a cup of coffee prepared for

me. My companion and two or three other persons who happened to come in, one of them being a decently-dressed female, seemed to find nothing to object to, so I philosophically swallowed my repugnance and contented myself with opening a window. I mention this as an instance of the worst inn's worst accommodation—not as an example of what usually occurs.

From Prebul to Kelneck is some hours' drive through a country pretty well cultivated, but with very few villages or signs of habitation. The near ground is hilly and park-like, with much loftier distant blue hills on the left between the valley and the Danube near Orsova, where that river cuts through the Carpathians by a cleft at least two thousand feet deep. In this direction are the baths of Mehadia, which have been described by Mr. Paget and more recently in Murray's Handbook. I did not visit them, but was informed that the accommodation has greatly improved since those accounts were written, several inns and other houses having been added. As it is a favourite spot with many Hungarians, and is even visited from Vienna, it is most likely that some of the abominations of former times are done away with in these days of steam-boats and railways. Orsova is now so perfectly accessible and may indeed be visited with so much pleasure in a short trip, and Mehadia, with its sulphur waters, is so near Orsova and communicating by such excellent roads, that it would amply repay every improvement that could be made. The neighbourhood of Mehadia is understood to offer more variety of grand and beautiful scenery than any

watering-place in Europe. It is, however, excessively hot in summer and autumn, for the valley is closely shut in and the various waters rise at temperatures varying from 110° to 150° Fahrenheit. The baths are of great antiquity, and were well known to the Romans, who placed them under the protection of Hercules.

Between Mehadia and the road I was travelling, there is a place of great interest, the improved access to which will soon render a visit to all this neighbourhood much easier even than at present. It is the great iron establishment of Reschitza, one of the most important in Hungary, and to which the Oravicza branch of the South Austrian railway is about to be conducted. The works connecting this place with Oravicza, and so with the main line, have been for some time in progress, and will probably be completed in another year. Mehadia can then be visited as part of a tour from Vienna to the Lower Danube, descending the river to Orsova, and returning by Mehadia and the railroad, or the converse.

Reschitza is already a very large establishment, but is no doubt destined to a more important future. It is amply supplied with ore from the neighbourhood, and fuel is not far off. Up to the present time its development has been kept back by the distance from rail or river, but in spite of that it has greatly advanced. So soon as the communication is open there can be no doubt as to the result. The works are carried on by a Company whose interests are identical with those of the Company which projected and carried out the

main line of railway from Vienna to the Danube at Basiasch.

Much of this part of the country is within what is called the Military frontier, a district remarkable for good roads and decent towns, as well as for its military organization. However perfect the latter may be for defence, I can certainly give it credit for offering no impediment to the traveller. It is understood that every man is a soldier, and must turn out whenever required. I had no opportunity of seeing any of the corps of this militia, but, as an institution, it is well spoken of.

Near Kelnik, we enter the valley of the Berzava, one of the many gold-bearing rivers of Hungary. A very large and beautiful nugget, now in the Museum at Pesth, was found in the bed of this stream by a gypsy some few years ago. It is a common occupation of the gypsies every summer when the water is low, to work in the sands of the stream, and the result is said to be generally satisfactory. This has been going on probably for at least twenty centuries, and there are no signs of exhaustion. The sands are derived from the quartz and other veins in the mountains, whence come also the springs that feed the river. The Berzava flows into the Temes and so into the Danube, always supplying auriferous particles that escape the search of the gypsies.

I observed a curious appearance about the trees in this neighbourhood. Many of them were stripped of their foliage to about twenty feet from the ground, and the branches and leaves seemed to be replaced by a nest

of portentous dimensions. At first, I suspected the presence of the 'Roc,' as described by the Arabian poets, but soon discarded that idea as too decidedly Oriental. I next fancied that I must be treading in the steps of M. Du Chaillu, and felt inclined to look for specimens of the Gorilla, or rather of that curious nest-building ape, with an unpronounceable name, the near companion of the Gorilla, described and figured in the travels of our modern Bruce. Whatever the authority for M. Du Chaillu's picture may be, I think nothing but the ape was wanting to complete the resemblance of the object in the drawing to that I recognized in the trees in this part of Hungary. But the ape was not to be found, and the nests resolved themselves after a time into haystacks of small size erected on stages about eight feet from the ground, the trees selected being such as are large enough to support the stage and shelter the hay. In order to make room for the hay all the lower branches of the tree are removed, and care is taken that there shall not be too much growth to interfere with the making the stacks of a convenient height. A large umbrella-shaped roof to the stack, not only covering it, but projecting far beyond its outer extremity, helps to render the shelter more complete and the appearance more singular. These stacks are convenient enough in many ways. The cattle in winter, when grass is scarce, assemble under them to be fed, and no fence is required to keep the animals off till the day of need arrives. In bad weather, during the almost tropical storms that are

common in this part of Europe, these umbrellas afford excellent shelter both for man and beast. Nothing can penetrate them, and they are large enough to give a fair amount of space for refuge. Although I have only noticed these curious constructions on and amongst the trees near Oravicza, something of the same kind—a stack erected on a stage in the middle of a field, allowing animals to herd beneath and be fed on the spot in winter and sheltered in summer—is not uncommon in Hungary. In spring, after the hay is eaten, nothing but the platform and the huge umbrella thatch at some distance above it are seen.

Much of the road in this part of the country is very bad, being torn and injured by the heavy torrents of rain that evidently accompany the great storms. The streams then become greatly swollen ; they undermine their banks, near which the road is generally constructed, and in many places deep and dangerous trenches are formed. The bridges are also frequently carried away. The sides of the hills exhibit, in broad, deep, red furrows, admitting of no cultivation, the destructive power of the rain. It was curious to see in one place a hundred men at work repairing bridges recently destroyed, and close by, toiling over ploughed fields, a dozen or twenty oxen dragging a huge piece of iron from the works at Reschitz to the railroad, while many parts of the road were in such a state that it seemed impossible for any number of cattle to drag the heavy weights occasionally passing. There was a

good deal of movement on this road, but it certainly would bear improvement.

Lupak is a small Bulgarian settlement, between Kelnik and Goruja, the next station. The houses are little better than mud-huts, and in this respect contrast with those of even the very poorest Hungarian village. But if the houses are built of mud, and the fences enclosing them are often broken down and always in a decayed and rotten state, so that one might almost make a gap with a walking-stick, there is always one *ouvrage de luxe* in the shape of a stone gateway, generally arched at the top, and not unfrequently sheltered by a small roof for its own special preservation. It is indeed not easy for a stranger to discover what there is to preserve, for the door does not correspond with the doorway, and if it did, is generally left open; but it is evident that the household god of the Bulgarian peasant has taken up his abode in this part of the establishment, and is provided for accordingly. This peculiarity was observable in every house of the village, and even in reference to the churchyard. It may be that no one would willingly enter the thick bed of mud intervening between the archway and the house, and still less would any prudent stranger risk himself inside the house except in case of special need; so that the peasant, after all, may be acting wisely in presenting his best architectural feature where it is likely to be most seen and admired.

The costume of the people in this Bulgarian village

is quite different from that seen in the neighbouring villages of Wallachs or other borderers. In addition to the curious horns of which the headgear consists, and which have been already alluded to, the women are clothed in short petticoats, made of some thick material, in place of the linen chemise, and the men are more warmly clothed than the Wallachian peasants, and in rather different style. I did not learn the history of the colony. The people seem to keep themselves quite distinct from their neighbours in all matters.

Between this part of the country and Reschitzza is a remarkable cavern district. The hills consist of limestone, much broken, and pierced with numerous natural holes, as in the entrance to the Zsil Valley already described. A natural tunnel of great length is said to open from the hills on this side into the heart of a singular kettle-shaped and enclosed valley.

Goruja is a village on the banks of a small stream in a picturesque district. It offers very poor accommodation, and no supplies. It is about four hours distant from Oravicza, but, with fresh horses and by day, the distance might probably be done in less time. No fresh horses could, however, be procured there or in any other places on the occasion of my visit, and I was obliged to push on, although I had already been travelling twelve hours with the same pair. I reached Oravicza about ten o'clock at night, having started from Karansebes before five in the morning, and travelled the whole distance (about 70 miles) with the

same horses, resting only three times. It was astonishing to see with how much spirit the poor animals continued to get on, even to the last, and I have no reason to suppose they were any the worse for their journey.

Oravicza is now a very important place. It is the temporary terminus of a branch of the main line of railway from Vienna to the Danube, about to be extended to Reschitz. It is in the near vicinity of an important coal-field. There are copper and gold mines close to it. The black shales of the coal measures are here distilled for various mineral oils and paraffin, and there are several other industries and manufactures carried on in its neighbourhood. There are several inns, two of them large, and provided with billiard-rooms and coffee-rooms. These are crowded enough at night, but deserted during the day. There are also fine public buildings, and a small public garden. The town consists of one long street, certainly more than two miles from one end to the other ; but there are few side streets or houses beyond this principal street, and not much to notice in the town itself. Most part of it is quite new, and it has every appearance of great prosperity, which is hardly to be wondered at when one considers the extreme rapidity of its development. Its existence is barely alluded to by Mr. Paget, and it is only incidentally mentioned in Murray's Handbook, and I find no other record of it in modern accounts, although as a centre of mining industry it dates far back in the history of this part of Hungary.

By far the most important industry in the neighbourhood of Oravicza is that arising from the existence and development of the coal and iron fields adjacent. These are at some little distance, and are reached after a long, tedious ascent through a thickly-wooded valley, over a road kept indeed in tolerable condition, but too much used by the incessant traffic of coal carts to be very excellent. From the top of the ascent one looks down upon a kind of elevated valley, black already with smoke, but bright with marks of active industry in every part. The valley is small, measuring only three or four miles in extreme length, and from a few hundred yards to less than a mile across. It is not, however, like most coal deposits, of the nature of a trough or basin. It is rather like a saddle, the beds starting off on both sides from a central line. They incline steeply, and are soon far below the surface, but they seem on the whole very regular. There are beds of coal, of ironstone, and of black slaty stones or bituminous shales, the latter yielding valuable oils on slow distillation. The iron-stone is more abundant in proportion to the whole mass of the deposits than the coal, and the quality is very good. The shales are infinitely abundant, but are not rich in oils.

The central point in the district is the village of Steuerdorf, which is a modern colony of small houses, for the most part white and picturesquely dotted over a large space. It is a very prominent object, and all the principal official habitations are there. Beyond,

on the other side, is forest, and to right and left extend the various works, which are at once seen to be very extensive. Tall chimneys at various points, large square massive buildings, covering the machinery and the engines at the tops of coal shafts, vast black heaps of coal in one place, of iron ore in another, and of shale in a third, all testify to the rapidity and magnitude of the operations.

The iron is mined by horizontal drifts or tunnels into the side of the hills, and one of these is now in course of construction, which will run half through the valley. The coal is mined by vertical shafts. The ironstone is of the kind common in some parts of Scotland, and known as black band. There are as many as eight principal seams, all among the shale, overlying the coal, and some of them a foot thick. They are easily worked.

The coal of Steueldorf was first recognized in 1793. It seems to have been experimented on at various times, and was known to possess properties different from, and superior to, those of the lignites of the Danube and Theiss valleys. Mr. Paget, writing in 1837, speaks of it as "coal now in use for the steam-boats, which the English engineers declare to be in no way inferior to the best Newcastle."* But I was informed on the spot that the first mining works of importance were not undertaken till 1845. Since then, owing to the enormous strides made in manufacturing industry and locomotion, the work has been progres-

* Paget's Hungary and Transylvania, vol. ii., p. 153.

sing with wonderful rapidity. The coal is used on the railways between Baziasch and Pesth (a distance of 300 miles, including the Oravicza branch), in the manufacture of pig-iron on the spot, and in various other manufactures at Oravicza. It is employed in the manufacture of gas at Temeswár, and other towns on the railway as far as Pesth. It is also conveyed to Reschitzá for puddling, and is sold largely for household use in every town and village to which it can be conveniently carried. The consumption is now about 75,000 tons per annum, but for the last year or two has not increased. As soon, however, as the railway to Reschitzá, passing through the coal-field, is completed, a great change will doubtless take place, for the long conveyance in carts, at present necessary, seriously interferes with the employment of the coal in many ways.

The quality of the Oravicza coal certainly does not come up to the description of the English engineer quoted by Mr. Paget, but it is quite good enough when properly handled to answer all the ordinary purposes of mineral fuel. It has, unfortunately, one point of resemblance by no means desirable. It evolves a large quantity of gas in the mine, which, mixing with common air, becomes highly explosive. Several explosions have already taken place, and, as the works deepen, the danger seems to increase.

The high furnaces, at the extremity of the little valley, furthest from the ores but close to the coal, are on a large scale, and seem to do a good deal of busi-

ness. They are more modern and better appointed than is usual in the district. The principal part of the iron pig made here is used at Reschitz, as the establishments are connected and have mutual interests. Reschitz seems conveniently situated for manufacturing purposes, and, of course, will be much more so when the railroad is completed. It is certainly astonishing that, in the absence of any other roads than those now existing, the works can have gone on so long, and increased so rapidly, as they have done.

Oravicza, as I have already remarked, has long been celebrated as an important mining centre in this part of Hungary. For a long time its mines were worked by the Turks. At a later period the works were drained by the Austrian Government; and about a century ago they were the subject of an elaborate and interesting account by a well-known scientific writer of his day, the Baron Born. This writer alludes, indeed, chiefly to the copper mines, which are now of secondary importance, but which then yielded a considerable variety of rich ores. He also mentions other industries, and the place was evidently of some magnitude. Other later writers, among whom Beudant may be mentioned, have noticed the mineral wealth of this part of the Banat; and it is now more carefully and profitably developed than ever.

The gold mines of Oravicza are worked close to the town, and, though not of first-rate importance, are extremely interesting, and are moderately profitable.

Unlike other mines of the kind, the gold occurs here in a peculiar sandstone in a set of small veins of micaceous iron ore. I was not able to examine the mines personally, and was obliged to be contented with looking at the working plans and specimens, and hearing an account of them from the manager. It is only recently that these mines have been regularly worked.

Besides the coal field of Steueldorf, which is not very large, two or three other much smaller deposits are known in the neighbourhood. One of them is near Reschitz, and the coal obtained from it, said to be of good quality, is largely used there. It is a fact already mentioned, that the coal in these parts of Europe is rarely of the same geological age as that found in Western Europe. It is usually much newer and inferior, but still the quality is sufficiently good to enable it to be used with advantage.

On the day I had selected to examine the mines at Steueldorf there had been a visit from a number of official persons to inquire into the state of the mining population, and I found all the mining officers in full dress after meeting the commissioners. They were recruiting, after their morning's work of reception, in a garden belonging to the principal inn, where beer could be obtained. I found them little inclined to disturb themselves, nor could I (though reaching the works at eleven) obtain any help till after dinner. When this had been despatched, I was asked to take

coffee with the principal manager, and examine the maps and plans, which took some time longer. We then proceeded to look at the iron mines, and afterwards the coal mines. Everything was at a standstill in honour of the inspection, and the day seemed devoted to black coats, beer, and tobacco. Returning in the evening to Oravicza, I found that an illumination had been ordered to close the eventful visit, but as this turned out to be strictly confined to official necessity, it afforded a better opportunity of judging of the want of popularity of the Government than the extent of the resources of the town. It was not uninteresting to notice that the deference and respect with which every stranger is treated, was paid, without grudging, to the gentlemen who were performing their duty on this occasion, and yet no one could help seeing that their presence was distasteful, and their task unpopular. I heard of no reason for this feeling, except that the whole matter was a novelty, and that the institution of the inquiry had some relation to recent changes. The only sign of illumination, on the part of the general public, seemed to consist of one, or at most two, tallow candles stuck in the window of various houses. There was just enough to make the result ridiculous.

All the mining operations and manufactures of Oravicza are under the general superintendence of a most intelligent and popular chief, and they seem to advance rapidly and in a satisfactory way. Many

of them are carried on, more or less completely, by members of the railway company, whose interests are chiefly French.

From Oravicza to the Danube, at Baziasch, is a short railway trip. The distance is about twenty-five miles to Jassenova, the junction with the mail line, and then nearly fifteen miles further to Baziasch. There is nothing to observe with regard to this part of the journey: and indeed generally, the South-Eastern State-Railway of Austria, which cannot have been very costly in its execution, is singularly wanting even in those few points that give interest to railroads in other places. There are no important works, few towns or even villages to be seen near the line, and nothing special in the cultivation of the country. The stations are for the most part small and unimportant, and are often placed in very out-of-the-way spots, apparently far from the towns they supply.

But the country through which the railway here passes is a part of the great Danubian plain, and has its share of that singular vegetable wealth that is characteristic of the whole district. Having only recently come into the possession of the Christian Powers it partakes more of the peculiarly rude and savage state of the Turkish provinces than other districts of Hungary, and its flatness and marshy character, when uncultivated, rendered it, at one time, dangerous to traverse. Like the parts of the Danube near the Black Sea, or the Campagna near Rome, or like any other large undrained, flat, and uncared-for district, it

was avoided as poisonous, and was notorious for its fatal fevers. The very lands, however, which, when neglected, were so poisonous, yield, when cultivated, the most marvellous crops of corn.

The soil, a rich black loam, untouched till lately by the plough, scarcely needs more than sowing, and there is hardly a crop that grows in Europe that has not been successfully tried in the Banat. Wheat, maize, barley, sorgho, or sugar-grass, rye, oats, rice, flax, hemp, rape, and tobacco, have all been grown, and each has had, in its turn, a success of the most extraordinary kind. So rich and permanent is the soil that manure is never used, and the same crops are grown off the same land year after year. The land capable of growing these crops was sold towards the close of the last century at exceedingly moderate prices, and Germans, Greeks, Turks, Servians, Wallachians, and, it is said, many French and Italian adventurers, took advantage of the opportunity. It is now drained, cultivated, and healthy ; fever and malaria are almost unknown ; and all that was wanted to complete its value was the railroad, already traversing it, and cheap coal and iron ready to be supplied in a very short time.

It must not be concluded, that the whole of the Banat is situated within the great plains of the Danube and its tributaries, or that the plains, with their vast wealth of soil, are only rich within this district. On the contrary, the whole of the central part of Hungary traversed by the Theiss and its numerous tributaries is characterized by the same soil, while the less fertile

tract to the south-east is also in the Banat. The name, derived from a former division of the country,* but only of recent application, includes a part of the south-eastern plains, and perhaps the richest and the best part. It also includes a part of the mountain district. In all this district agriculture is rapidly improving, and agricultural implements are being introduced as, no doubt, Messrs. Shuttleworth's establishment at Pesth can testify.

* "Ban" is a local title, corresponding to the Roman *Dux* and our *Duke*. The *Banat* is simply the *Duchy*. All the Hungarian territory west of the Carpathians is sometimes called the Banat or Duchy of Temesvár, but the term is usually limited in its use to that part of the district above described.

CHAPTER X.

Up the Danube.—The Steamboats and their Accommodation.
—Baziasch to Belgrad and Semlin.—Semlin to Mohacs.

Of all the rivers of Europe the Danube is the most remarkable, the most important, the most interesting, and the most picturesque. It receives the largest number of tributaries, many of which are little inferior to first-class rivers. It runs through the broadest plains, and between the loftiest cliffs; it has in some parts the greatest depth, and in others the most troublesome shoals and rocks, and the most serious natural interruptions of any; it is fed by streams proceeding from two of the loftiest of the European mountain chains. Taking its rise more than a thousand miles from the point of its embouchure in the Black Sea, it drains an area of more than half a million of square miles of country, far exceeding, in the length of its course, the number and importance of its tributaries, and the area it drains, any of the rivers of Europe, and even excelling in all these respects that great Asiatic river, the Ganges. With its source less than 3000 feet above the sea, and a length of course more than twice as great as that of the Rhine, it yet pours over the plains a body of water more unmanageable than that of the

THE DANUBE.

Rhine, whose source lies at an elevation nearly three times as great, and whose waters have so much shorter a distance to travel.

Combining so many points of geographical interest, the Danube is no less remarkable in its historical recollections, whether we regard ancient history before the Romans were able to penetrate north of the Alps, or the later period of Roman occupation, or the Mediaeval period, when the Crescent and the Cross were struggling for victory in the lands on its banks. There is no branch of inquiry in which the Danube does not afford much that is instructive, and it contains much that, though old, is new to the present generation. Its natural history, its physical geography, its civil and social history—all these present matter well worth studying. Its banks abound with objects suitable for the pencil of the artist, as well as the descriptive pen of the tourist, and it is only surprising that this great and noble stream has remained so long undescribed and has been so little visited.*

* In speaking of the Danube as comparatively unvisited and unillustrated, I may seem to ignore the existence of some well-known and admirable works both of literature and art. Mr. Paget's book, already quoted, and Mr. Hering's "Sketches and Illustrations," are beyond praise, and are as accurate as they are beautiful. But there remains so much to do, and it is so impossible for a small number of artists or travellers to combine all points of interest, that the one or two brilliant exceptions rather confirm the necessity of going carefully over ground so full of interest, than contradict the assertion in the text.

But there are good reasons for everything. Till a very recent period, a trip down the Danube involved extreme inconvenience and discomfort, and a return up the stream was still less desirable. To travel by land in the vicinity of the river was in the highest degree disagreeable, uninteresting, tedious, and costly. Inducement there might be to visit the country, and, from time to time, a traveller would return who had surmounted the difficulties and tasted the reward, but so much was said of the difficulties that few followed up the subject.

Of late years the case has been somewhat different, and accounts of the improved state of the navigation of the Lower Danube have, from time to time, reached the travelling world in England, but the authorized tourists' companion has not yet announced that the Danube is a task to be performed with that amount of ease and certainty required by the typical *paterfamilias*, who can spare only a limited time, and must see his way clearly to a specified day of return before he can make a start on his autumnal trip.

And there is another reason why the Danube has not been done justice to, even by those who have made the journey and returned home safely. The Danube alone, of the navigable rivers accessible to travellers from the west, runs towards the east. There is, therefore, a temptation to descend rather than ascend its stream; and this tendency has been greatly increased by the uniform advice of all who have written concerning it. All have advised to descend the Danube to the point

of greatest interest and return by land. I venture to proclaim in the face of all these authorities, that at the present day it is far wiser, if the traveller desires to understand and enjoy the beauties of the Danube, to proceed by rail to the furthest point he is able, and then take to the stream. He will still have to descend a little way by water to reach the finest part of the scenery, because this is better than to make a long journey through a country hardly ever visited, and over very bad roads, but in a few years even this state of things will be improved, and the plains near the Black Sea will be accessible by rail. At any rate, it is to be advised that all who desire to enjoy the Danube should travel as far as possible by land, taking advantage of the railway, and then, if time allows, make a further passage down stream by the first steamer that approaches before ascending to see the river as it ought to be seen. It will soon be found that the Danube is a river worth visiting.

The fact is, that the Lower Danube steamers are now the largest, the best-appointed, the most comfortable, and in all respects the best adapted for the tourist of all river-boats in Europe. They are extremely roomy and very powerful, very well appointed, clean, with an excellent *cuisine* and good attendance, and there is a certainty of obtaining on board very fair wines and excellent coffee. They are constructed something like the great American river and lake steamers. A large saloon on the after deck, leaving only a covered gallery between it and the bulwarks, is beau-

tifully furnished, and serves for meals and lounging. The whole of the roof of this saloon deck, and a considerable space beyond, is covered with an awning, and affords a delightful promenade, provided with seats. This is the usual resort of the company. Several small cabins, with good sleeping accommodation, are provided, but for these an extra payment is required, and the usual sleeping-place for gentlemen is below the saloon, where wide and comfortable berths are provided, and where there are also numerous sofas of smaller breadth. The ladies' saloon I did not see.

Except during the time of the great fairs at Pesth, and on other occasions of unusual resort, which are well known and should be avoided, there is no crowding on these boats, although they are tolerably supplied with passengers from station to station. The fares are low, and the tariff of prices for food and wine moderate. There is a good *table d'hôte* at one o'clock, but no one is pestered to join it, and, indeed, a large proportion of the passengers feed *à-la-carte*, as is the custom generally throughout the Austrian dominions. The waiters are all German.

One point only I would direct attention to in reference to personal comforts on board the Danube boats. There is a table in the sleeping saloon, supplied with basins and water for washing, but the subsequent process of drying is left to the resources of the traveller. Not having taken a towel with me, and not knowing the custom beforehand, I was rather surprised after washing my hands and asking for this con-

venience to be told by the waiter, whom I had summoned to my help, that no such thing was allowed.* A napkin, surreptitiously purloined from the dinner-table, was the only resource.

The steamers do not generally continue their journey through the night, except between Pesth and Vienna. The cause of this is simply that passengers will not then be obtained at the various intermediate stations, but the result is pleasant enough. The boat generally lays-to off some important station, and starts before day-break. If he desire to do so, the traveller can go ashore, and continue his voyage by the next steamer.

So great are the distances on the Danube, and so large is the scale of everything connected with this river, that to journey by the steam-boat becomes a habit before one can reach the end even of a short trip. There is none of the hurry and excitement experienced on the Rhine, where the whole interest of the river is huddled into a hundred miles of picturesque cliffs and ruined castles, succeeding one another so rapidly that not one can be properly seen. The Danube has, indeed, its hundred miles of grand mountain scenery, entered between natural gates two thousand feet high, but this is only a part, and a very small part, of its beauties. There are Wallachian and Servian villages

* The exact expression was characteristic. I asked the man to be kind enough to give me a towel. He simply replied, "Das kann ich nicht." It was evident that he thought himself wronged, if not insulted, at being disturbed, probably from his cigar, by so unreasonable a request.

and Turkish towns; Belgrad and Semlin replace Ehrenbreitstein and Coblenz ; and the mountain tracts near Pesth, and between Pesth and Gran, are not inferior to the Siebengebirge. Between these, however, are a hundred other points of interest. There are wild, noble forests, sometimes seen in the distance, sometimes approaching the water's edge; gigantic, well-wooded islands, a fine undulating country, and distant blue mountains ; and all is on a large scale, proportioned to the breadth of the river, the volume of the water, and the extent of the country.

All that has been said above applies to the Lower Danube between Vienna and the delta of the river, whence there is a short railroad to the shores of the Black Sea. This vast distance is mounted against the stream in four days and a half from Galatz to Pesth, and in about twenty hours more to Vienna, the whole fare from Galatz being something less than five pounds sterling. A steamer also ascends the Danube daily from Vienna to Linz, but the service is conducted on a different principle, and the boats are of necessity much smaller.*

Assuming that the traveller feels some interest in the

* Besides the Danube steamers, there is excellent accommodation for passengers on board the powerful steamers navigating the Theiss and Save rivers, starting from Semlin and returning thither. These, however, only pass up the river so long as it runs through the great plains, and there are no inducements for the traveller to avail himself of them, except when circumstances require that he should proceed from one point to another not yet reached by the railway.

Danube and really desires to know of what its beauties consist, I must then advise him strongly to proceed by rail from Vienna to Baziasch, and thence descend to Widdin, the largest Turkish town on the river. Widdin is a strong fortress in Bulgaria. Not having visited it, I can say nothing as to its capabilities, but it would be advisable so to time the arrival that there should be as little interval as possible before the departure of a steamer upwards. From this point as far as Orsova, and so to the station of Drenkova, the Danube runs through a narrow defile in the Carpathians. These mountains are here broken through by a cleft of several thousand feet, perhaps one of the most remarkable natural phenomena to be seen and studied in Europe. The ascent of the rapids and the passage of this part of the river may now be accomplished without difficulty, but a few years ago the descent even in small boats was considered a great feat, and the usual method of passing from Orsova to Drenkova was by a road constructed recently at great cost.

The cliffs of the Danube at the narrowest part are upwards of 2000 feet above the level of the river, and the water is said to be of enormous depth. The width of the stream is only 116 yards. Remains, or rather indications, of a singular overhanging road constructed by the Romans along one cliff still remain, and prove how carefully that people made provision for every alternative. Above Drenkova is Baziasch, the present terminus of the South-Eastern Austrian Railway, and although there is no village and scarcely room for two

houses, the appearance of the hotel is very satisfactory. There is also at the railway station an excellent restaurant, so that the passengers who come by rail to embark at this point are likely to be well taken care of during the time they may be detained before the arrival of the steamer.

I went on board at this station and there commenced my ascent of the Danube, leaving the grand scenery below for another occasion. The country is at first hilly, with distant views of the mountains, and the banks are not much cultivated. There is frequent change in this latter respect, cultivated lands and uncultivated wooded tracts alternating with each other. The Hungarian, or left bank, is generally more cultivated than the Servian, or right bank, of the stream. The Servian side is, however, the more picturesque.

The plain of the Danube gradually widens as we advance, and after passing one or two small forts, one of them dating from the time of the Romans, we approach the mouth of the Temes, the first and smallest of the two great rivers that pour into the Danube, after accumulating the drainage of the western slopes of the Carpathians. The Temes is a fine stream. It runs rapidly through the plains for a long distance, but its course is winding and slow towards the mouth. The current has of late years been quickened by the cutting off of some of the bends by a canal which enters near Temeswár. It passes through a very rich country now crossed by the railroad, and Temeswár itself, which has

long been known as a pleasing, clean, and flourishing town, has already, since the completion of the railway, greatly increased in population and importance.

Not far from the mouth of the Temes, the Save, a first-class tributary of the Danube, pours its waters into the greater stream and separates the ancient and important towns of Belgrad and Semlin. Belgrad is still Turkish. Semlin, and all the rest of the country higher up on the left bank of the Save, although still Servian, belongs to Hungary. The Save is navigable, and a steam-boat ascends and descends it regularly for some distance. The appearance of Belgrad is extremely picturesque, the fortress being built on a tongue of high and bold land between the two rivers, and the town, with its minarets and mud hovels, extending round and beyond the foot of the hill.

There are three parts of Belgrad—the Servian and the Jewish being distinct from the Turkish, but each is, if possible, more filthy than the other. The population is large and unsettled, and since my visit the Servian town has been bombarded from the fortress. It is not easy to see what purpose is to be attained by this destruction of private property, and by the sacrifice of lives of innocent persons likely to ensue.

The fortress is considered to be very strong, both naturally and artificially, but it has been neglected, and would probably fall at a first attack by regular troops, unless, indeed, the singular pertinacity of the Turks should induce them to defend it to the death. The town is always dull, and there is little traffic, although

a steamer crosses at intervals from Semlin, and thus brings the people into communication with those of Western Europe. Belgrad is one of those frontier towns alternately in the possession of the Christian and the Turk, and partaking of the peculiarities of both. There is much that is interesting in it, and it is well worthy of a visit.

The oriental character which distinguished Belgrad thirty years ago is now entirely gone : the cathedral out-tops the minarets ; the open bazaars have been converted into shops with glazed fronts ; the houses have grown from low, one-floored buildings, with dead walls and flat roofs, into constructions in German style, several storeys high, with windows towards the streets.

There is still, however, a line of demarcation between Christianity and Islamism. On one side of the great square are houses with white walls and bright-green window-shutters ; on the other side a mosque, with walls crumbling to the dust, and trees and low roofs behind, suggesting thoughts of Constantinople or Cairo.

The views of Belgrad are eminently panoramic. To the west is the Save, winding along as it emerges from forests. The shore on the Servian side is abrupt and picturesque ; but on the Hungarian side flat. Towards the north-west a low mountain tract separates the Save and the Drave valleys, and the spires of Semlin are seen at no great distance on the opposite shore.

The Turkish population of Belgrad has sunk into poverty, and the principal people are now the Servian merchants.

Semlin is only separated from Belgrad by the Save, but that river is wide at its mouth, and two miles of water must be crossed before the opposite town is reached. Semlin is now a clean, well-built town, modern, almost entirely Hungarian, and with very little appearance of German internixture in the names of streets, public announcements, or the names of persons and places. The town is tolerably large and not badly paved, and as in the most recent published accounts of the place mention is expressly made of its miserable condition in these respects, there is no doubt it must have undergone great and rapid improvement of late years. There are coffee-houses and places of entertainment in the principal street, and several modern churches and public buildings. As I did not stay more than a few hours, I had no occasion to try the qualities of the hotel, but there could be little doubt that good quarters would be found there.

The left bank of the Danube opposite Semlin is flat and swampy, and indications of the mouth of the Theiss soon appear. This great river, which, with its numerous tributaries, drains the whole of the country to the north-east and east, as far as the Carpathian mountains in both directions, is, in many respects, the most interesting and important of all the feeders of the Danube. The agricultural value of the plains it crosses is great almost beyond calcula-

tion. It passes the hills of Tokay, whence come the richest and most-valued wines grown in the world. Many of its tributaries pass through gold-bearing rocks, and its sands are thus auriferous. It is popularly said to contain more fish than water, and among the fish are the finest varieties of the sturgeon obtained for the table. In its bed are buried some of the most interesting fossil bones found in Europe, and in quantity these are scarcely equalled in any known locality. The river valley leads up to the most picturesque and interesting districts of Hungary. Its waters are navigable by steam-boats for a long distance, and three railroads already shoot their iron arms up its various branches. Passing through a very large tract of nearly level land near the Danube, its stream becomes comparatively sluggish, but it brings down a large body of water, and, when flooded, covers an almost boundless expanse.

From the Theiss to Peterwardein there is not much of interest, and what there was I was unable to see, as the night had closed in. At Peterwardein we stopped till early morning. Neusatz is exactly opposite, and is a modern and large town, chiefly German. It communicates with Peterwardein by a bridge of boats. There are some curious earthworks near, attributed to the Romans, and enclosing, with the forks of the river, a triangular area of considerable size, no doubt used as a fortified camp. One of the best of the Hungarian wines, that called "Schiller," is made near here, on the right bank of the Danube, which is hilly and pic-

turesque, and strongly contrasts with the low flat expanse on the opposite side. .

The whole of the country between the Save and the Danube, for upwards of a hundred miles, is a narrow strip, the two rivers running nearly parallel, both coming from the west. The land is high, and the hills rise near the river on the south side, while opposite are the plains, rich but flat. After meeting the Drave, the Danube makes a turn, and the direction of its course is nearly due east for a long distance. Mounting the river, therefore, we proceed first westwards parallel to the Save, and then northward; but as the Save continues with its former direction, the rivers then separate. Shortly after this separation, and near the bend of the Danube, the Drave comes in, running parallel to the Save, and at no great distance from it. Both the Save and Drave take their rise in the western extremity of the Austrian Alps, between Vienna and Trieste, and have made a long course through varied and interesting, but very little visited, country before their waters enter the Danube.

Past the mouth of the Drave, commences the great expanse of tertiary rock of the Danubian plains, and the mode in which these plains are watered and penetrated in every direction by large navigable streams, is such as to ensure their being, one day or other, valued as they ought to be. The country is for the most part flat near the river, but rises in small undulations at a little distance from it. Occasionally there are hills of some magnitude.

It is by no means the case that this tract is without interest or natural beauty, nor are the plains tiresome swamps, as one would suppose from the efforts some travellers seem to make to pass them as rapidly as possible without notice. On the contrary, there are many pretty valleys among the hills, occasional ruins of robber or Mediæval castles, very picturesque villages, and much cultivated land. Vines clothe the hills, when these are steep and have a good aspect ; streams run along the valleys, or are seen on the hill-sides, and a population is always indicated if not always seen.

Most of this beautiful and homely scenery of the Danube is on the right bank, and on this side are seen occasionally the country residences of the richer proprietors.

The Drave, like so many of the tributaries of the Danube, is navigated by steam-boats, and is rapidly becoming opened. The lands through which it passes are rich, but are not yet so available as they ought to be.

From the mouth of the Drave as far as Mohács the country is somewhat less interesting, but is nowhere altogether flat. Both sides of the river are Hungarian, but the right bank remains the most hilly and varied, and near Mohács the hills become more distinct. There is here a somewhat important alteration in the geological conditions, which results in improving the picturesque features of the right bank of the Danube, and rendering available an im-

portant deposit of coal, which will be alluded to in the next chapter.

Up the Danube, from Baziasch to Mohács, was a trip that occupied from shortly after noon on one day to about seven o'clock in the evening of the next day but one. The points of interest throughout the whole trip were frequent, and I met with no drawbacks whatever. The boat stopped at many stations, sometimes for several hours, sometimes only for a few minutes, but whenever and wherever it stopped the same regularity and punctuality were observable. I several times inquired the probable time of arrival at different stations, and found I could depend perfectly on the accounts given. The times of departure were absolutely fixed. When it is considered that the passage of the steamer from Galatz to Pesth occupies several days, and involves a multitude of stoppages and the transfer of much freight, as well as of many passengers, it will be seen that steam-boat navigation on the Danube has already attained a high pitch of perfection. No one indeed need fear the smallest difficulty or irregularity, and, as far as I could learn, accidents and interruptions are as little known as on other rivers. The passengers frequenting the steam-boats are no doubt of various classes, but I saw no symptom of any disagreeable admixture, everyone being quiet and well conducted. Smoking of course there was in abundance, and everywhere; but of another disagreeable habit too often accompanying smoking, and said once to have disgraced Hungary, I confess

I noticed very little. It has probably been corrected owing to the energetic remonstrances of the patriotic nobleman who attacked it in the public prints many years ago. If so, it is a proof how much better it is to confess and point out a weakness or bad habit than to deny it or pretend to be blind to its existence.

CHAPTER XI.

Mohács.—The Railroad to Fünfkirchen.—The Town, Churches, and Inns of Fünfkirchen.—The Coal-field adjacent.

ALTHOUGH the town is neither large nor clean, and is certainly very uninteresting, the neighbourhood of Mohács has witnessed two of the most important and significant battles ever fought in Europe. The first of these, fought about three centuries ago, laid open the Western world to the inroads of the Turks, was the cause of changing the dynasty of Hungary and introducing a German prince to the throne of that country, and separated Transylvania from Hungary. A king, seven bishops, 500 nobles, and 20,000 soldiers are said to have fallen, and although probably a large proportion of the latter may have more fitly ranked as missing than fallen, still the massacre was great. A century and a half afterwards the same spot was the scene of the last of a series of victories over the Turks, and this second battle prepared the way for the expulsion of the Turks from Europe. Such is the information derived from books regarding Mohács.

A town so rife with historical recollections ought, one would think, to present some appearance or characteristic to distinguish it from others, and it

rather takes away from the romance of travel to find, where we expect a memorial of former events, however rude, that there is hardly a building half a century old, and not a single object of antiquarian interest. It is only as a specimen of a second or third rate Hungarian town on the Danube, that Mohács is now worth alluding to.

I have seen the town both in fine and wet weather—and will endeavour to communicate to the reader my honest impressions concerning it. It is certainly as miserable a specimen of a town as can well be imagined. On the alluvial plains of the Danube, which appear to stretch out at this point into infinity, though really by no means extensive, a few detached houses, of small size and very low, are seen dotted about apparently without order. The intervals between these houses are wide spaces with deep ruts thick with impalpable dust in dry weather, and immediately after or during rain impassable by slush and by a peculiar mud, which soon works into a thick, slimy, slippery paste, only hardening to become once more an impalpable dust. Vast piles of black powder greatly resembling soot greet the visitor on landing, and the small railway station is the only building very near. I confess that when told there was no departure by rail till next morning my courage somewhat failed me, and I looked forward to a sleepless night in company with a numerous assemblage of very lively fleas.

Fortunately, I was agreeably disappointed. A little Hungarian woman, with wonderfully sharp, active fin-

gers, seized at once on my baggage and could hardly be induced to part with it on any terms. At last, I succeeded in obtaining a compromise, my heavier *impedimenta* being lodged at the railway station for the night, while I was walked off in charge of my active little friend, who triumphantly swung the remaining bag over her shoulders. She soon conducted me to a low one-storied building of very humble pretensions. At this place, however, I was kindly greeted, a clean neat bedroom was given me, and in due time as excellent a cutlet and as good wine as if I had been in a first-rate hotel in Vienna. I passed a very pleasant twelve hours in Mohács, and shall not cease to think of it with satisfaction as far as creature comforts are concerned.

The next morning I was up early, and made my way to the station long before the departure of the train. On my way back to the Danube, after visiting Fünfkirchen, I was forced to return to Mohács, and was detained several hours until the arrival of the steamer, so that I had ample time to discover all the objects of interest in the place. As on my first visit I was choked and blinded with dust, so on my second I had to work my way through the slimy mud, slipping at every step. Even the short distance from the railway to the steam-boat stations was almost unmanageable in the latter case, but the ground rapidly dried and enabled me to complete my experiences.

During the whole time of my descent of the Danube, the weather had been peculiar. For some weeks before, there had been no rain, and the change that had com-

menced was at that time only affecting the valley of the Danube, without reaching the country fifty or sixty miles from its banks. The dry weather broke up by a series of thunder storms, accompanied by almost tropical rain, which for several days together commenced about four o'clock in the afternoon, and lasted till about nine in the evening. During this time the lightning was remarkably vivid and frequent, the thunder loud and near, and the rain sufficient to drive everything and everybody under what shelter they could find. Late in the evening, and after the storm had cleared away, the nights were very bright and beautiful. The weather had been, and continued, very warm for the time of year. What struck me most with regard to these storms was their almost exact punctuality, and the number of days they continued. I have noticed the same fact for many days together in the West Indies, but not in that case in a river valley. The storms in the Danube seemed to pass up and down the valley, not extending far on either side.

There are no true streets in Mohács. Some of the houses, each in its garden, seem indeed to have been built with an idea that another similar house in a similar garden was not far off; but it is rather the exception than the rule for the doors of adjacent houses to open towards the same direction, and no sort of order has been observed by the builder as to the position of the house, its dimensions, or the style of its construction. I saw, in making a tour through what must be called its streets, no appearance of shops of any kind. Two

or three children, and I think two women, were idly hanging about, but no other sign of life was visible, not even a pig, a dog, a fowl, or a duck showing itself.

It might appear that this singular collection of houses could hardly belong to a place where business of any sort is transacted, but such an impression would not be correct. A very considerable amount of goods of various kinds are landed here from the steamers, and conveyed up the country to Fünfkirchen, and far beyond. Not only is it a steam-boat and railway station, but as a shipping place for coals it is beyond comparison the most important station on the Danube. There is a ferry across the Danube, which seems to be in incessant request, the boat being covered each time of crossing with as many loaded carts, beasts, and human beings, as it can carry, and returning without delay after each trip. The trips succeed each other incessantly from early morning to sunset, but no village or town, or even habitation, is seen on the other side. A numerous, if not active and bustling population, may generally be seen on the bank of the river, and, no doubt, these are the people, who, at night or in bad weather, occupy the houses of the town.

The chief industry of Mohács is connected with the railway to Fünfkirchen and the shipment of the coal brought down from the mines. The greater part of this coal belongs to, and is required for the use of the steamers of the Danube Steam Navigation Company. The rest is sold to other steamers, or is

sent to a distance by water in barges. The coal is heaped on the river bank, when discharged from the trucks, and is there left exposed to the weather. It is certainly much better than its appearance would warrant one in supposing, and it had need be so, since all that is seen consists of dirty black dust, occasionally coated with alum or discoloured by sulphur. It is both removed from the trucks, and put on board in barrows, loaded and wheeled by a multitude of men, women, and girls, and in this way the whole industrial population seems occupied. It is a curious sight to watch them at work. A continuous stream of barrows, containing coal-dust, is seen passing along a narrow plank or across a barge to each ship. As soon as each barrow is emptied, the owner returns to the coal heap by another path with his or her empty barrow. At a certain point a man is stationed with an indefinite supply of tickets, and as each porter approaches he or she receives into a little pocket or bag, hanging to the dress, a check for the load carried. Nothing is said, and hardly the slightest pause is made, and back goes the empty barrow to be refilled and again accounted for as long and as frequently as the labourer pleases. The appearance is wonderfully like that one sees when a swarm of ants have discovered a treasure, which they are anxious to transfer rapidly to their store-houses. The most perfect order prevails. Occasionally, a song is struck up for a short time, but for the most part not a word is uttered. The coal is shovelled into the barrow, run along to the ship, and brought back

again, as if the whole transfer were being conducted by machinery.

The railway to Fünfkirchen crosses the alluvial plains of the Danube at right angles, and it is soon evident that this plain is not here so level as one at first imagines. It undulates, and before long rises considerably, as is seen by the railway cuttings. There is, however, good geological reason for this, and the cause is recognized on approaching the station of Villány, where a hard quartzy or sandstone rock rises like a wall out of the earth, till then covered entirely of tertiary and alluvial rock.

Villány is an interesting locality. On the slopes of the hill is grown a well-known and excellent red wine, and all around the cultivation is high, and the scenery picturesque. The flat appearance of the plains is entirely gone, and from this point onwards the country is pretty, and the outline varied. The distance of Villány from the Danube must be about twenty miles. There seemed a good deal of movement at the station, and many houses and small villages are near, in addition to the town itself. There is no want of passengers on these railways, and even the smallest and most out-of-the-way stations generally show some activity. One often wonders where the people come from, when on passing by rail through a country apparently without habitations, the train stops at a small roadside station to take up and set down passengers. It is, however, a fact that wherever railway communication is opened, passengers and goods will soon come to take advantage of it.

I noticed at the Villány station indications of the importance of the district for the growth of wine, a number of casks lying ready to be carried down to Mohács for shipment, perhaps to Pesth or Vienna, or to some other place of large consumption. Even England is now receiving supplies from this quarter, and if the wines are kept long enough before drinking there can be no doubt that they will please the taste of those who know and appreciate purity of flavour. Without age, however, none of the Hungarian wines are agreeable, and it is to be feared they may receive a bad name, if forced on the market in a young state, and tasted without knowledge of their peculiar properties.

Beyond Villány the country is hilly, and the villages are larger and more frequented than near the Danube. I noticed here, for the first time, though it is not peculiar to the district, a singular construction of the churches, derived, perhaps, from the time when Turkish taste prevailed in the country. Instead of consisting of a nave and choir—with transepts and aisles as additional members of the building, when anything more important than the simple parish church is required—we have here only a square building of considerable size, and a short choir beyond. Over the whole of the square, except the angles, rises a huge semicircular dome, which is generally painted of the deepest and brightest red, while from the remaining part rises a small clock-tower, square to some height, and terminating with a flattened sphere and small spire.

The distance from Mohács to Uszög, the last station

on the rail, is about thirty miles, and the station itself is about three miles from the town of Fünkirchen. The railway, which is chiefly a mineral line, runs on into the coal-field, which is distant a few miles to the north-east, among hills of somewhat greater elevation than those near the town. It is likely to be continued westwards, and will, at Kanisa, fall into the main line already constructed between Pesth and Trieste, passing the Platten See. The country that will have to be traversed is wild, and at present not much inhabited; but the opening thus made cannot fail to be of great importance, and will enable the Fünkirchen coal to reach the Adriatic, and compete with that now brought at great cost from England. It is understood that in its whole course the river Drave runs through rich and productive lands, which only require means of communication to insure their yielding very large results. The proposed railway will not, indeed, run along the valley of the Drave, but will be parallel to it, and not very distant.

Comfortable omnibuses, of a peculiarly pleasant construction, not unlike a combination of coach and short omnibus, but with only a light tilt, useful in case of bad weather, convey the passengers from Uszög to Fünkirchen, at a charge of about sixpence. Other carriages were also waiting to be hired, and the number of passengers was considerable enough to fill several of them. The road to the town is paved, and in good condition; the fields are enclosed by hedges, and everywhere there are marks of intelligent cultivation. I was rather sur-

prised, at first, at the very modern appearance and style of everything in this neighbourhood; but the numerous tall chimneys spoke with sufficient clearness of the cause. The neighbouring coal has already produced a marvellous result, and has given an air of wealth and prosperity which cannot be mistaken.

The town of Fünfkirchen, though I have been unable to find any account of it in guide books or descriptions of Hungary, is large, clean, well-built, flourishing, and wealthy. It is said to contain about 18,000 inhabitants, and has a considerable trade in various food products of the neighbourhood. Much excellent wine is grown on the surrounding hills, the country is covered with corn-fields, and there are various valuable crops obtained. The soil around is excellent, and the climate favourable.

There are several good streets, provided with shops of all kinds, both useful and ornamental; and I observed especially a number of jewellers. There are also several booksellers. I mention these as indicating the character of the people, and the extent to which they have taken advantage of their position, and the more so, as there seems no outlet to the place, and, except as connected with the railroad and adjacent coal-field, no reason why it should be better than other towns in Hungary. In the middle of the town is a large open market-place, or square, in which is one of the churches. It has a red dome, resembling that already alluded to. It has also a crypt under the

choir, which seems to be common enough in Hungary, as in Spanish churches of a certain period.

But the most interesting building in the town is another of the churches, of much more recent date, built at enormous expense, out of certain large special funds, set apart for the purpose, belonging to the very rich episcopate of Fünfkirchen. The style of this building is not only very peculiar, but rather original. To take advantage of the position of the ground, the principal façade of the church is the south side, which is of great length. The western extremity is comparatively little seen, and is poor; but the church stands sideways towards a group of large, ecclesiastical buildings, forming, with them, three sides of a noble square, open to the south. A grand entrance occupies the central part, and on each side are five principal windows, somewhat Romanesque in form, but with Gothic tracery. Columns, with very singular, barbaresque capitals, occupy the spaces between the windows. Large statues surmount these, on the roof. On entering the church, the choir is on the right side, and the nave on the left. The choir is raised considerably, and beneath it is a large crypt chapel. The nave is plain. None of the windows are of coloured glass. The general effect of the interior is good, but the walls are not much ornamented. There are no apparent aisles in the nave, but two portions, one on the north and the other on the south side, that would have been aisles, are partitioned off, forming distinct chapels, not architecturally decorated. The walls are painted in fresco, to

resemble architectural detail. The choir is divided into three parts, the central part being richly ornamented with carved seats, over which rises, on each side, a high screen. The pulpit, reading-stand, and altar are all richly carved and constructed of ornamental marbles. The doorways and the pavement are also of marble; but the walls are whitewashed. There is a handsome and excellent choir organ, in addition to the great organ over the west door. There are many frescoes and pictures in the church, all modern, but well-painted and in good taste, though rather flat.

The west front has two high, square, battlemented towers, with Romanesque windows, high up. There are also false west lights. The general effect is poor.

There is an old church at that end of the town furthest from the railroad, which is now attached to a hospital and poor-house, but which is especially interesting as having been at one time used as a mosque. It is one of the few distinct reminiscences of Turkish sway in this part of Hungary. An elegant minaret, rising from a little court in front, is connected with a square enclosure covered with a dome, and is an exact repetition of the mosques at Belgrad and in the other Turkish towns on the Danube. There does not seem to be any other complete building of ancient date; but there are several walls, and some more perfect fragments, of which no account can be given by the residents. These, no doubt, belong to the period of Turkish rule.

Among other signs of the flourishing condition of

Fünfkirchen may be reckoned the state of the hotels, of which there are several. One, in the principal square, or market-place, dedicated to the Rhinoceros, is on a large scale, and of long standing. It is laid out in a style of positive grandeur ; but I was advised not to go there, as it was said to be indifferently managed and uncomfortable. It has a large coffee-house attached, and, as in Vienna and Paris, the pavement and road in front of the house are entrenched upon by chairs and orange-trees, converting it, in summer, into an additional and out-door symposium.

Another and a really excellent inn is situated conveniently enough in one of the principal streets, near the market-place. It is called "*Der Wilde Mann*" (The Savage), and there is a public garden with baths almost adjoining it. This hotel I can safely speak well of, for I have nowhere in Germany, or in the Austrian dominions, found better or more comfortable arrangements of all kinds. It is large, and is built round two sides of a court, generally crowded with vehicles. A handsome roofed corridor runs round the house, open towards the court-yard, and there the landlord and his friends sit reading their newspapers, and discussing Hungarian or German politics. A large *Speise-saal*, or dining-room, opens from the corner, and near it is a staircase to the principal bedroom floor. The other rooms on the basement are kitchens and servants' apartments. Above is a long series of bedrooms, all opening from a gallery above the corridor. The rooms

are fair-sized, well-furnished, perfectly clean, and well-appointed.

I am the more particular in alluding to the nature of the accommodation here, and in other places where I found it better than usual, because of the general impression prevailing as to the badness of the inns in Hungary. My own experience is certainly much more favourable than that of former travellers, and I am strongly inclined to believe that a great improvement has taken place within a comparatively recent period. The inns are generally managed by Germans, and the German language is always sufficient for the traveller.

My object in visiting Fünfkirchen was to look at a coal-field in the neighbourhood, which has lately become of much interest, owing to the rapid increase in its development, and the circumstance of its coal superseding that of many of the other Danube-valley deposits.

After an hour's drive in one of the light carts of the country, I came into the coal district, easily recognized as well by the natural sections of coal seen by the roadside as by the high chimneys and pits passed from time to time. The country between the town and the mines is very pretty and well wooded, and, as most of the works have been commenced within the last ten years, there is none of the desolate appearance so common in districts that have been long subject to mining operations. I do not know a more beautiful specimen of woodland and valley scenery than is to be

seen on looking across to the opposite hills from the colony, close to the principal and central mining establishment; but I can fancy that something of the same kind, though on a rather larger scale, may have met the eye of a traveller, a century ago or less, who wandered from the spot where is now the railway-station at Stoke, across the country to Hanley, in the Staffordshire Potteries, in England. The nature of the wood may have been different, and perhaps, at the time I speak of, there was more cultivation in England than there is now in Central Hungary, but the general effect must have been the same. Few, now visiting the part of England I am alluding to, would fancy that it had once been so beautiful, and only persons accustomed to see young and rising mining districts, as well as those that have been long worked, are likely to recognize in the latter the elements of beauty they admire in the former.

The coal-field of Fünfkirchen is very small, but it is much larger than that of Oravicza. It has been ascertained to be about eight miles in extreme length, and half a mile wide. It is terminated, naturally, to the north-east, by older and lower rocks cutting it off suddenly; but, towards the south-west, it is covered up by newer rocks, and may, perhaps, extend beyond the furthest known point. Like the Oravicza coal, it belongs to deposits of the age of the poor coals found at Whitby, in Yorkshire, and not to those worked at Newcastle and the other great coal-mining districts of England. Like the Oravicza

deposits, also, it is much more inclined to the horizon than English coals generally are, but the beds all dip one way, and are not on a saddle as in the former case. There are several seams, but all are thin, and apparently very poor, though regarded as worth working. Such coals, if found in England or many other parts of the world, would certainly be set aside as worth little or nothing, for they are not only dirty-looking, but are full of sulphur (iron pyrites), and if left exposed to the weather they decompose, heat, and either burn by spontaneous combustion, or become coated with a kind of alum, resulting from double decomposition. They are neither good-looking, nor easily or cheaply worked, but they possess certain properties and qualities which give them great value. One of the chief of these is, that they become rapidly hardened when exposed to the action of fire. Thus, instead of falling through and becoming wasted when put on the surface of a furnace or hot fire, this dirty powder immediately cakes. Whatever the quantity may be that is thrown on, the inside becomes sheltered, and remains defended by the cake formed at the surface, till the whole is coked through. The coal, therefore, burns slowly, giving out great heat, and with little or no waste. This peculiarity is very important, and has rendered the mineral properties at Fünfkirchen much more valuable than they could otherwise have been.

There is a neighbouring coal-field larger than that just described, situated at Vasas (pronounced *Vaschasch*),

for which the sum of 600,000 thalers, (nearly a hundred thousand pounds sterling,) is said to have been lately paid. It is not yet in a position to be opened, but when the railway, already alluded to, is constructed, it will probably take a full share of the business of the neighbourhood. The quality of the coal is said to be the same.

At Fünfkirchen, as at Oravicza, I fell in with public proceedings and rejoicings, but here the whole affair was popular. Arrangements had been made, on the day I happened to select for my visit, for a performance by the members of a singing society, to take place in the open air, in a natural park, close to the miners' colony. After making myself acquainted with the particulars of the coal-field, and when I had partaken of the hospitality of the director, I was much pleased to see the gathering of the neighbourhood on this occasion. The singing was in parts, and entirely by amateurs, chiefly the various persons employed in the mines. All the voices were male. The visitors included a large number from the neighbouring town. Dancing followed the singing, and was kept up to a moderately late hour. The whole affair was extremely pleasing, but it was painful to an Englishman to find Austrian bayonets brought into sight, and a guard considered necessary, on so simple an occasion.

The paucity of Hungarians among the persons engaged in the various mining operations, was again brought under my notice in this place. Out of a large

industrial population, settled for some years, and very flourishing, in a spot removed a long distance from any other than Magyar towns, there were hardly any native Hungarians to be found. Bohemia, Moravia, Wallachia, had all sent a multitude of common workmen; Saxony and Rhenish Prussia, with Bohemia, supplied almost all the instructed labour and intelligence. German was the language everywhere spoken, and all the business was transacted in its dialects. It would seem that neither Magyars nor Slaves will devote their energies to matters so sublunary as raising coals, or conveying them to market.

A large quantity of the Fünfkirchen coal is washed by a contrivance similar to that used in Belgium, and sometimes for inferior coals in England. It has been attempted, but hitherto with very imperfect success, to make the coal-dust into bricks, which can bear carriage. Could this be done, the value of the coals would be greatly increased, especially when the railway is open to Kanisa. The quantity of coal taken out of the mines already open is somewhere about 80,000 tons per annum, and is rapidly increasing. The shafts are not yet very deep, and water is not troublesome underground. There is no reason to anticipate difficulty or exhaustion for a long time, and the other mines that may be opened are not likely to glut the market.

The railway at present runs into the very middle of the coal district, and the coal is run out of the mine into the trucks. It comes out very small and

very dirty, but becomes yet smaller and dirtier before it reaches Mohács, where being first shovelled out of the trucks and thrown on a pile exposed to the weather, and then shovelled into barrows and thrown down into the hold of a ship, it is reduced to the finest powder. I carefully examined a heap of several hundred tons without finding half-a-dozen coals as large as a cocoa-nut, and very few lumps were as large as a small apple. I have elsewhere explained how it is that, notwithstanding these drawbacks, the mineral is still so valuable. It should be added that several seams of ironstone are found near the beds of coal.

The extremely picturesque hills, among which and on whose sides the Fünfkirchen coal makes its appearance, have been already alluded to. They seem to continue with the same general character as an undulating, picturesque, richly-wooded country for a considerable distance, and they may be recognized at once in a geological as well as an ordinary map. They are, in fact, deposits brought into the place we find them by some upheaval, and have nothing to do with the rocks of the plain through which they have been forced, or which have been collected round their bases, when they stood up as islands in the tertiary sea.

CHAPTER XII.

Mohács to Pesth.—The Middle Danube.—Approach to Buda.—Cities of Buda and Pesth.—Public Buildings and Museum.

FROM Mohács to Pesth by the Danube is a trip of about twenty hours, including, however, a stoppage of a few hours at night. Although the country is by no means uninteresting, this is a part of the river about which little can be said. At first, the approach of evening and unfavourable weather prevented me from seeing the really fine scenery between Mohács and Baja, a large town on the left bank, at which the steamer stops. Thence to Tolna, another considerable place on the right bank, there is a good deal of fine country on that side of the river; but on the left the great swamps and morasses of the middle Danube begin to appear and interfere with the interest. Pacs succeeds after an interval, and then Földvar, beyond which there is no town of importance and little that is remarkable for a long distance. The left bank is desolate and dull, and although heavy crops are grown, a very large tract admitting of high cultivation is still in a state of nature. Little of the country on either side is seen from the steamer, as the river is broken

up by islands, many of them of large size, and most of them covered with low wood.

Leaving Mohács at 6 P.M., it was not till after noon of the following day that I found much to observe, and although this paucity of interest may have been somewhat attributable to the weather, which was less favourable than it had been, it is certainly the case that in this part of the Danube the objects of special mark are few and far between. The right bank continues the most varied and interesting, and the ground on this side at length rises and presents a picturesque background as we approach Buda. The course taken by the steamer is by the western branch on nearing the large island of Zsepel or Ratzköve, which reaches nearly to Buda.

The Danube between the mouth of the Drave and the neighbourhood of Pesth has been described already as running through a vast flat alluvial plain extending eastwards to the foot of the Carpathians. The whole of this part of the river has a character and appearance quite distinct from its usual appearance elsewhere. Owing to the nature of the ground, it winds and twists much more, it embraces many more islands, and is more sluggish. About a hundred and fifty miles in a direct line from north to south, corresponds here to nearly double the distance to be traversed when the windings of the stream are included.

Through the plains thus crossed come the principal rivers that feed the parent stream, and it is here that the great agricultural wealth of Hungary may be

considered to culminate. Being now traversed along its whole length by the railway, some of the produce that was formerly carried by the Danube takes another course; but the result of railway communication has been to cause an increase in the traffic on the stream far greater than the amount of this loss, while carrying trade has been opened for the railway, which bids fair to exceed anything of the kind in Europe. It may, then, be looked forward to as a certainty, that all possible means of conveyance will soon be called into requisition, and that some day this part of the country will be as much visited and travelled over for business purposes as other places with similar natural advantages which have been longer under cultivation.

The Danube, being a wide river, often deep, and constantly shifting its bed when not kept within it by human contrivances, is still very much in a state of nature, and the amount of steam navigation upon it, though not inconsiderable, does not seem yet to have interfered with the supply of fish. Many parts of this long reach between Pesth and the mouth of the Drave are crowded with these animals, though they are not even there so plentiful as in the river Theiss. Among the various species the varieties of sturgeon are the most important. They are caught in immense quantities and conveyed to market; but the larger kinds are not preferred for the table. In addition to the oil, and the roe, which is made into caviare, isinglass is obtained from them, and the

flesh is commonly eaten for food. On the banks of the stream a considerable variety of birds congregate, and there are some rare species both of them and of quadrupeds; but the beaver, the most interesting of the rarer European quadrupeds, is more common above than below Vienna.

In some parts of the stream where it runs through the great plains attempts have been made, with great success, by cutting across the narrower necks of the Danube, to shorten the distance from place to place by diminishing the windings. The stream is quite rapid enough to ensure success in undertakings of this kind, for the moment a small cut is opened the water sweeps through and widens it with great velocity, and the current round the longer way being diminished, a deposit of mud is produced there which in time stops up the old channel entirely.

The islands of the Danube are frequently shifting, although some of the larger ones, covered with thick wood, are tolerably steady. Two of the larger islands, one (St. André) about twenty miles, and another (Ratzköve) more than thirty miles in length, succeed one another with a short interval, the smaller one commencing a little above Pesth, and the other a little below it. Both are cultivated, and have several villages of considerable size. The larger island is passed on the east in proceeding from Mohács to Pesth. The small one is left to the west on going on towards Vienna.

But the great and most interesting feature of the

Danube, in this great sweep through the plains, is the almost infinite multitude of the smaller islands. These succeed each other so rapidly, and the river is often so wide that they reminded me of a coral archipelago I had seen on the south side of Cuba in the West Indies. They are all so green and so bright, so invariably of ~~the same form~~ and so nearly of the same shape, that the resemblance is startling. At one time they were almost as dangerous, for the steamer was frequently grounded on or near them; but this source of delay in Danube navigation is now pretty nearly at an end.

Like the Rhine, the Danube in winter and spring is subject to sudden and heavy floods, the waters sometimes rising with extreme and dangerous rapidity. The cause of this has already been alluded to in speaking of the narrow gorge between the Carpathians, which is the only passage through which the accumulated waters of the stream can reach the Black Sea. When heavy rains fall on the mountains and plains, or when the winter snows melt rapidly, the whole of the flat country is subject to inundation, and great mischief may result. No one who considers the magnitude and number of its affluents, and the strict limits within which it is confined before emerging into its delta, can fail to understand the importance of this matter in the physical geography of the Danube.

The approach to Buda, marked by a multitude of little mills, worked by the action of the stream on undershot wheels, is strikingly beautiful, and no-

where, perhaps, is the advantage of mounting rather than descending the Danube better seen or more felt than at this point. Coming up from the great plain, the ground on the left hand, at first a low, alluvial cliff, gradually becomes higher, and a harder rock, a kind of limestone, takes its place. At Promontorium is a picturesque and well-placed country house, with a hill rising behind it, on which are vineyards. It is said that the habitations of the villagers are cut out of the rock, but at any rate the rock affords good cellerage, and there is a flourishing population dwelling in houses of the ordinary kind. Near this point the river bends, and the heights of Buda come first into view. They are fine and well situated, and behind them is a noble amphitheatre of much loftier hills at a considerable distance, embosoming the lower range, and greatly increasing the effect. It is this distant range of higher hills which one fails to appreciate in coming in sight of Buda from the north, for they have already been passed, and the city and its crowning fort are merely seen standing out of the water with hardly any background, and little picturesque effect.

At first, on coming up stream, Buda only is seen, its citadel, the palace, and a few minarets on the top of the hill, and at the foot that part of the lower city looking towards the south. A high steep cliff rises abruptly from an angle of the river to a considerable height, and seems to stand almost alone, like a huge rock interrupting the navigation. Behind it is a richly-cultivated valley, opening to the river, quite close

to the foot of the rock. The rock is the celebrated Blocksberg, recognized at once by the observatory near the top. From its summit a magnificent view is obtained both above and below the city, and extending to the hill country beyond.

An outer circle of much loftier hills encloses the Blocksberg and the city of Buda. For a long distance the country houses and gardens of the wealthy inhabitants of Pesth may be seen winding up the valley, partly concealed by the trees, and occasionally showing their white fronts, overgrown with roses or other creeping plants. Behind them is a tolerably lofty range, from which the views of the surrounding country must no doubt be superb. Along the whole of the right bank of the Danube, from far above Pesth, into Wallachia, as I have already more than once remarked, the hills appear at intervals by no means distant, and if not always close to the present course of the stream, they are always much nearer than (the right) than the other (or left) bank. Near those points where the river makes a sudden turn, there is generally, as in this case, a sound geological reason for the change, and hard limestone has the same effect here that the quartz at Villány has between Mohács and Fünfkirchen. Spurs of the Carpathians approach the Danube near Pesth.

As the city is approached nearer, the scenery becomes more interesting, and before long the buildings of Pesth are seen behind those of Buda, apparently forming with it a single town. Presently the bridge

comes in sight, its noble span and great height fitly connecting the two cities. After this the towns are clearly separated, the low and poor part of Buda is past, and the much more modern and better-built, if less-picturesque, city of Pesth contrasts with it on the opposite side.

Buda and Pesth stand towards each other something in the relation of Westminster and Lambeth, if we suppose London and Southwark out of the way. There is, however, no resemblance between the towns in any respect. Buda is old, Turkish, and dirty, but abounding in interest. Its German name *Ofen* (a stove, whence our word *oven*) indicates one of its peculiarities, namely, a hot, stifling atmosphere, which is derived partly from position and partly from a multitude of hot springs bursting forth from the hill sides, and celebrated for the last two thousand years for their curative power. In former times the town must have been very inconvenient, as the strip of low land by the river is very narrow, and the hill rises abruptly almost from the water. There is now a tunnel through this rock connected with a good carriage-road leading to the top, where there is a gigantic palace, no longer occupied by any royal person, but the residence of various officials. There is also a road going up along the side of the hill next the river, but this is much further round, and less convenient. The views from the road and from the summit are extremely fine, much more so than could be imagined by any one looking up from the river. They include a wide

stretch of country, looking across as far as the mountains near Nagyag. At one's feet, on the opposite side of the river, the city of Pesth stretches out its long lines of modern streets in various directions.

The houses in the upper part of the town, both near the Fortress and on the various roads that lead to it, are all good, and look comfortable enough. They offer a vivid contrast to the miserable spectacle presented in the lower part and on the slopes of the Blocksberg. These, however, are the parts of the town formerly inhabited exclusively by Servians or Jews, the Pariahs of Hungary.

Buda itself is a long straggling town, with straggling and very extensive suburbs, but without much that is specially interesting. Except the baths, everything belongs to that late unmeaning period of European history when there was little taste and when the fitness of things for their purpose was a matter regarded as of much less importance than their fitting a certain ideal classical standard. The Turkish wars that have so recently ceased in this part of Europe, have effectually prevented any memorial of antiquity from being preserved, but as the Turks could fully appreciate baths, they either left this part of the city arrangements as they were or improved them. There have been many Roman remains discovered and described from time to time.

The Blocksberg, with its circular fortress replacing an old watch tower, stands out in fine contrast to the opposite and lower hill, where the palace of the Arch-

duke, the churches, the theatres, and the other public buildings appear.

From the foot of the rock, below the Archducal palace, commences the beautiful suspension bridge, designed and executed by Mr. Tierney Clarke. This work was executed at great cost and under peculiar difficulties, for the Danube is here as wide as the Thames at London Bridge, and extremely deep on the side next Buda. Its bed also is alluvial, and not very well adapted to serve as the foundation of a pier. The river is subject to sudden and violent rushes of water, and a great volume of broken ice passes down in winter. Owing to the turn that takes place not far off up stream, and the islands that commence almost immediately below, this ice is particularly liable to be troublesome. The construction of the bridge took place at a time when iron coffer-dams and steam pile-driving machines were not in use, and thus great additional delay and expense were incurred. There are few more creditable works to be found on the Continent.

The proportions of the bridge are very noble, and the effect from whatever point it is seen is perfectly satisfactory. It now communicates directly by a convenient road with Buda, by means of a tunnel, only recently completed and also designed by Mr. Clarke, who, with his family, have been residents in Hungary since the completion of his great work. On the Pesth side, the bridge opens on a broad space a little beyond the centre of the town, but not inconveniently distant. There is still work to be done in completing the paving,

and finishing the buildings that are to give this square the effect it requires, but what is executed is satisfactory.

Pesth is built on the flat tongue of land opposite the rock of Buda. It is quite flat, and parts of it have been subject to serious inundation on the rise of the river in spring, but most of the streets are believed to be out of all danger at present. The town has an appearance of great newness, no old buildings, and, indeed, no antiquities of any kind forming part of it. It is for the most part well-built, though without much taste as far as the churches are concerned. The classical style prevails, and indeed this is generally the case in all modern buildings in Hungary. Pesth is not, however, really a modern town, having been in the Middle Ages the scene of numerous contests with the Turks, who lost and regained possession no less than five times within a very short period previous to 1686, when it was finally delivered into the hands of a Christian population. Since then, it has continued to grow, and has risen to great importance. It is regarded as the political and commercial capital of Hungary. Presburg, indeed, contests the honour, as in that city is the Cathedral in which the Kings of Hungary are crowned, but the Diet is now held in Pesth, and the more modern capital is assuming the lead in all matters. It grows rapidly both towards east and west. In the latter direction there are at present many open walks and drives in a green but uncultivated space of considerable extent, used as a Prater for public

promenades. Beyond this extremity of the town there is also a small wooded island, a favourite resort of the inhabitants in summer. Pesth already has a noble quay, wide and well-paved, adorned with some of the largest and best of the hotels and other houses, together with some public buildings facing the river. Landing places for the steamers, and ample accommodation for loading and unloading the ships that carry away or bring merchandise of various kinds, are to be found on this quay. From the quay, there are streets at right angles running up to the extremity of the town, and these again are intersected by large and handsome streets of shops parallel to the river and quay. The shops in Pesth are almost equal to those in Vienna, and there is an amount of movement quite equal to that of the Austrian capital, in proportion to the magnitude of the population. Hitherto, however, Pesth has not expanded into a very thickly peopled city, although the best part of the town, comparatively small as it is, is fully as large, if not larger in proportion to the poorer part, than is usual in capital cities.

Pesth is said to extend nearly two miles along the river bank, but the greater part of this is away from the best streets. On crossing the bridge from Buda the town to the left, though including some important buildings, is the least-fashionable portion. Here is, however, a gigantic barrack—an octagonal group of buildings enclosing a space said to be as large as Belgrave Square in London, and serving as a garrison for all arms. It is certainly capable of containing a

little army in case of need, and during the late political disturbances in 1848, received as prisoners almost all the principal inhabitants of Buda and Pesth. The pile of building, though not ornamental in an architectural sense, is very imposing from its dimensions, and from the very absence of any attempt at ornamentation. I did not enter it. Although once on the outside of the town it is now nearly in the centre, owing to the quantity of new buildings near and beyond it. It is as much as four storeys high and forms a remarkable feature standing up nearly detached, surrounded by public walks, but with busy streets around.

The hotels at Pesth are magnificent, and provided with all the luxuries that can be met with in other European capitals. Their charges also are not extravagant, although here, as in Vienna, house-rent seems dear, and the price charged for apartments is, therefore, rather high. It is the custom in this town as in Austria, to pay separately for every meal, and, indeed, for everything taken at the hotel in the way of food. It is a plan greatly to be recommended to strangers, as it simplifies accounts and enables one to know precisely the price of everything. There is no *table d'hôte*. This institution seems never to have reached Eastern Europe except by way of steam-boat navigation. It is not easy to give any reason for the absence of so convenient a mode of obtaining a good meal at the smallest price. One can only say that it is a custom in some countries and not in others. I found the food

excellent and the wines not less so at the "Königen von England," situated on the quay close to the landing-place of the steamer, and I had every reason to be satisfied. The other principal inns are also very well spoken of.

There are many coffee-houses in Pesth—many, indeed, in every street, for the Hungarians seem to delight in such resorts even more than the Parisians or Viennese. Some of these coffee-houses are extremely handsome and on a large scale; but all are well appointed and comfortable, and the coffee is excellent. The beer is not to be despised by lovers of that beverage.

The theatres of Pesth, though not handsome, are better-looking buildings and more prominent than the churches. They are numerous, large, and showy. The churches of all denominations are poor and unmeaning; but a synagogue has recently been built by the rich Jews which rivals that recently completed at Cologne. Both are among the finest specimens of architecture attempted by the Jews in modern times. Both are somewhat mosque-like and Oriental in their style, and the effect is good. The Pesth building appeared to me to be the larger of the two; but, being in a more open neighbourhood and better seen, I may have been deceived. It is interesting to find the ancient people of Israel, after so many centuries of bad treatment and persecution, now presenting themselves to society in Europe as they really are; daring to enjoy before the eyes of the world the wealth they have accu-

mulated, and permitted to spend a part of it in improving and decorating the towns they select as their residences. Persecution has not made them poor, nor has it diminished their capacity for appreciating those branches of the fine arts peculiarly adapted to their Oriental natures. Noble synagogues in every great city in Europe would be valuable additions to the sacred buildings already erected in them. They would also be a fit return for the freedom of opinion permitted in modern times in religious matters.

One of the most remarkable of the public monuments of Pesth, is the National Museum, a very large detached building, including several courts and standing in its own grounds. It contains public apartments adapted to the use of the Diet, or Hungarian Parliament, and a long series of rooms and galleries containing the national collections in all departments. The building was only commenced in 1838. It is now and has long been completed, so far as the exterior is concerned ; but the fitting and the arranging the contents is not so far advanced. At present the Natural History Collections spread over many rooms, and are the most interesting. They include all departments and are nearly confined to Hungarian products. So large is the series already obtained of Hungarian Natural History, and so extremely rich in this respect is the country, owing to its singular variety of climate, its geographical position, and its historical and archæological monuments, that one regrets to see foreign rarities or antiquities and other objects of interest

mixed up with the national specimens. It is to be hoped the time will come when all that is Hungarian will be kept strictly apart, and that the Hungarian series will be made much more complete than it is now.

Few people are aware how rich Hungary is in objects of Natural History. Including a large part of the great valley of the Danube, and almost the whole of the Carpathian chain of mountains,—one of the loftiest and most important in Europe next to the Alps;—crossed by the greatest of the European streams, and including some of its largest feeders; separated from Africa by barriers easily passed by birds and even insects; almost connected with Asia; having an extreme, but not at all an unfavourable climate; possessing numerous swamps and morasses as well as lofty mountain-tops, lakes as well as rivers, and deserts as well as cultivated tracts; having every variety of level within limits of more than eight thousand feet:—it is difficult to imagine any animal or vegetable, capable of living at all in a temperate climate, that would not here flourish, if taken care of. Thus it is that in the museum we meet with a multitude of African birds of kinds not elsewhere known in Europe, a mixture of quadrupeds of the most singular and interesting nature; and, no doubt, somewhat later many other departments of Zoology will be similarly illustrated. The fishes, for example, include many kinds peculiar to the waters of this part of Europe; some gigantic in their proportions, others as remarkable for their minuteness; and some of the insects are very

singular. The collection of dried plants, many of them on a large scale and adapted to illustrate the economic value as well as the technical peculiarities of the various objects, is not less interesting than the Zoology ; and, among objects of this kind, the collection of woods should not be forgotten. These, indeed, are quite as remarkable for the completeness with which every important fact is shown as for the quaint taste in which the specimens are finished.*

At present, however, the geological collections,—including under this general title minerals, rocks, and fossils,—are both the most complete and the most interesting of all. Hungary, especially in that great basin enclosed on three sides by the Carpathian mountains and drained chiefly by the river Theiss, is wonderfully rich in the fossil remains of the large quadrupeds who inhabited Europe previous to the last great changes that converted Europe into a continent, altering its climate to correspond with the change in the level of land. At this early period elephants, rhinoceroses, and even hippopotami, ranged from Asia and Africa into what is now eastern Europe, and adapted themselves to the circumstances of the country. They met here gigantic bears and large feline animals, horses, and also that singular large-horned deer (*Cervus megaceros*),

* Each kind of wood is made into a box resembling a bound book, with its name on the back. The box itself exhibits the grain of the wood in various directions, both natural and polished. Within the box is a technical description, and the dried leaf, flower, and seed, in various states.

whose proportions may be judged of from the Irish and Isle of Man specimens in all the principal museums of England, and by the restorations so ably effected in the Crystal Palace gardens, at Sydenham.

In the bed of the Theiss, and in the alluvial mud through which that river has at one time taken its course, are buried innumerable bones of these animals, which are frequently dug up in a state so absolutely perfect that they leave nothing to the imagination. A very fine series of these bones is in the museum, and I observed that although not quite yet in order, owing to the illness of the Curator, additions were being made on a large scale. The remains of the *Dinotherium* and those of the *Cervus megaceros*, are especially interesting, being here associated with those of the mastodon and several species of elephant and rhinoceros. Although no human remains have yet been described from these localities, it is not unlikely that they will hereafter be obtained and help to decide the great questions now at issue with regard to the time of the first introduction of man upon the globe.

Besides the Natural History collections the museum is enriched by a large series of Roman and other antiquities, of mechanical contrivances and models, and of modern paintings by Hungarian artists. The antiquities are of various periods, and include some specimens of great interest.

CHAPTER XIII.

Pesth to Gran.—The Ecclesiastical Capital of Hungary.—The
Gran Coal-field.—The Rail to Presburg.

THE mountains close in on both banks of the Danube after passing Pesth, and the river apparently becomes narrower, but this is chiefly owing to its separation into two parts by the large island of St. André. This passed, the direction is seen to change suddenly and the stream comes in from the west instead of north. The hills do not actually touch the river, but there is a considerable and picturesque group of high ground in the angle thus formed, especially on the right bank. So considerable is the angle, that the distance of Pesth from Gran by land is not more than half that by water. The road passes through a picturesque country and is hilly.

On the other side—the left bank of the river—the hills are much more considerable than at any point north of Baziasch, and in fact we here come upon an important group of spurs of the Eastern Carpathians. The mountains in sight, although at a considerable distance, are those behind which is the celebrated mining district of Chemnitz; and from this point a succession of high land conducts to the mountains in the north and east. We have here the natural limit, northwards, of the

great central basin of the Danube, and no doubt a partial limit or a boundary of part of the expanse of water (sometimes fresh and sometimes brackish) that, before the fracture of the Carpathians at Orsova, covered much of Eastern Europe. The part of the river we are now alluding to may, indeed, be regarded as a wide inlet, while the cleft at Orsova is a narrow outlet, of the Hungarian portion of the drainage of the Danube.

Much of the scenery between Pesth and Gran is in the highest degree picturesque. It is a mixture of wooded hills, cultivated lands, and occasional valleys leading up to beautiful ravines. Many houses and some villages are distributed over the country. As, however, my journey was made under rather unfavourable circumstances of weather I was unable to do full justice to it. Starting at 6 p.m. I reached Gran about 11 p.m. At this late hour, had not the weather improved, I might have found it very difficult to get to the Inn, for the night was moonless and perfectly dark, the town not lighted in any way, and the landing-place of the steamer not only a long way from the town but very inconveniently placed. Fortunately I was ready, bag in hand, and managed to be the first out of the steamer. There were, as it happened, two or three other passengers also landing at Gran, but they belonged to the town and knew their way. I seized a solitary straggler, who had come down apparently for the chance of some stray job, and enlisted him at once into my service. He conducted me along a narrow causeway, across a plank bridge, and by an intricate

navigation to the gate of the town, but I could not see enough to guide myself and was obliged to follow his steps quite closely to avoid losing sight of him and my bag altogether. After a time he conducted me to the Inn, which was a barrack of a place, very badly supplied with everything. Here I was shown into a bedroom and left to myself. The accommodation was inferior in every way to that I have often found in smaller towns and villages—it was very much inferior to that at Mohács. The room and the bed and every article of furniture was so dirty that I felt quite inclined to accept, as at least historically correct, the unfavourable accounts of Hungarian inns I had before rather doubted as so contrary to my modern experience. Gran, like some other cathedral cities, is more interesting than comfortable.

Gran is indeed an old-world town, probably not often disturbed by travellers. It is the Canterbury of Hungary—the seat of the principal Archbishopric and full of ecclesiastical dignitaries. These, however, not having many visits from strangers, except those of their own condition, who would probably be received into comfortable quarters, and the place having little business, there is not much inducement to improve the inns.

The next morning I was out early. The city is well placed, being grouped round a rocky headland projecting into the Danube. On the summit of the rock is a new and very costly cathedral, scarcely yet completed, but which stands proudly and by itself, and may be

seen from a great distance in every direction. It is the principal church, and indeed the only church with any pretension to architectural effect.

A zigzag road leads up from the town to the cathedral. It is wide, and was intended to be well-made, but already—though barely finished—the water has worn deep channels in parts of it, and without attention it will soon be destroyed. The rock is soft and easily acted upon.

Built in a style of which there are few examples in England, the new metropolitan church of Hungary is rather astonishing than pleasing to one whose eye has been educated to admire and feel the beauties of Gothic architecture. All the details connected with it are classical, but it does not seem to be a copy of any known building. The form is that of the Greek cross, the arms being almost of the same length and extremely short, so that the nave, choir, and transepts are barely perceptible in comparison with the vastness of the central square space surmounted by a large and lofty dome. The dome, in fact, swallows up everything, but it is certainly good in its proportions. It measures 82 feet in diameter at the base.

This great building has been in progress for the last 40 years, and has swallowed up sums of money almost incredible. The see of Gran is, however, extremely rich, being endowed with many valuable estates of great extent, that have increased in value till the annual revenue of the Primate is said to have exceeded 100,000*l.* sterling. So rich a prelacy has

naturally attracted royal and princely primates, so that Gran numbers among its dignitaries names celebrated in history. The cathedral was commenced and carried on during his lifetime by the late Prince Primate Rudnay. It has, since his death, been continued by his successors.

The whole of the interior of the cathedral is lined with marbles, and supported by marble columns, most of the marbles used being rare and valuable, and all beautifully polished. There are many paintings in better taste than is usual in Roman Catholic churches of modern date, and, for the most part, these are by Hungarian artists. There is also sculpture of some beauty. The side chapels, of which there are several, are extremely rich, and in every part the finish is as complete and as costly as the design is grand. One of the side chapels is a replacement, stone by stone, of an ancient church, formerly on a hill adjacent. This church was almost destroyed by the Turks, and, though only of the sixteenth century, possessed some historical value.

The exterior of this grand Christian Temple is not yet completed, but the scaffolding has been long removed, and what remains is matter of detail.

The west front is a handsome portico, looking towards the town. The east end is that presented to view from the river, and is a noble apse of very good proportions. The walls are built of a white hard limestone of the vicinity, which has the effect of marble from a distance.

The town of Gran is tolerably large, rather straggling, but not badly built. There are many ecclesiastical buildings within it besides churches, but none of them seem to have any architectural pretensions. The streets are wide and the shops good. The day of my visit was market-day, and the streets were filled with open stalls, well supplied with food and other produce from the neighbourhood, and also by the usual manufactures required by country people on their occasional visits to the market-town. The town extends in various directions, several new streets leading out towards the country. All seemed to be tolerably well-built, and the houses of fair size.

I had an opportunity while at Gran of noticing the effect of the storms of rain that occasionally fall on this part of Europe. I have rarely seen heavier, even in the West Indian Islands, but I am not aware whether the actual quantity has been measured by a rain-gauge. Coming in at night after one of these storms on the Danube, I was not unprepared for some result, and next morning, when I went out, I found with little surprise that a considerable body of water was running through the middle of the main street in the lower part of the town, and had already choked a drain by which it ought to have reached the river. There were also accumulations of stones, and a good deal of sand. In the afternoon of the day of my stay in the neighbourhood, I was overtaken a few miles from the town by a much heavier storm of rain

than any that had yet been experienced, succeeding two or three others that had fallen during the day. I was travelling in one of the open carts of the country, and was fortunately sitting on a peasant's thick coat, made of the usual undyed wool. So thick and solid are these coats, that I suppose no amount of rain could penetrate them. I put on the coat when the rain began, and sheltered myself as well as I was able, but the rain drove with so much force as actually to wound that side of my face exposed to windward, although I turned up the collar of the coat and bent down my felt hat to meet the storm. On entering the town it seemed altogether deserted, but as I was anxious to reach the inn to change my dress, I declined to take shelter. I found the water already running in a strong, steady current through the street, and near the lower part of the town there was an accumulation nearly three feet thick of sand and mud, through which the cart could hardly pass. The stones of the paved road were disturbed, and many of them removed, and it really seemed that, if the storm lasted much longer, the foundations of the houses must be reached. The town was almost impassable even the next morning, and I found, when preparing to leave, that many labourers were employed in clearing away the accumulation of sand and repairing the damage.

Such storms are probably rare, but they are so analogous to the great tropical rain-falls, that they are worth noticing in reference to the climate of this part

of Europe, and the rapidity with which changes are effected where the rain has free and uninterrupted course.

Gran is not itself a place with any important industry. It consumes rather than produces. The adjacent country is rich and is cultivated with the ordinary food-plants; but the great object of interest in the neighbourhood is a coal-field, worked at a distance of a few miles, and at one time supplying the steam-boats and Pesth almost exclusively. Since the opening of the Fünfkirchen coal-field, by means of the railroad between the mines and Mohács, the Gran coal has been less in request, and the price as well as the quantity sold has diminished; but the works are still on a scale of some magnitude, though less profitable than formerly.

The Gran coal-field contains one group of a large number of small deposits of mineral fuel, extending from the foot of the Austrian Alps through the great plains of Hungary to the foot of the Carpathians. Following the course of the river Raab, from near Gratz in Styria to the Danube at Gran, a long series of detached masses of coal have been traced, and most of them have been sufficiently explored to enable the geologist to understand their history. Similar deposits recur on the other side of the Danube, on the banks of the Theiss, and all have the same peculiar nature and belong to the same series. Where this coal can easily be obtained, or where it occurs in places from which it can be readily conveyed by rail-

or by water-carriage, it becomes worth working, and thus the Oedenberg and Gran deposits,—the one near Vienna, the other on the Danube,—have been rather extensively used, while others not inferior have been comparatively neglected.

The mineral fuel found in these places has the appearance of good English coal, and might almost be mistaken for it, when first brought out of the mine, by persons little accustomed to compare minerals of this kind; but on exposure to weather it very soon shows a difference. The large blocks break up into smaller ones, and the smaller ones reduce to powder, so that the whole mass become almost valueless.

There are many points of detail in which a marked difference exists between the lignites, or brown-coals, as these varieties are called, and the ordinary stone-coal. The peculiarity already alluded to is the most important to the consumer, and there is another almost equally important to the producer. Instead of the beds or seams of coal being tolerably regular, so that if proof is obtained of a bed in one place, and similar proof at a distance of a mile or two, it may be assumed that there is a continuous deposit, which is the case with stone coal, the lignites are more usually in isolated lumps, often very thick, sometimes running along for a good distance, but nowhere regular enough to justify any outlay at intermediate spots. These two drawbacks, and some others less important, greatly interfere with the value of the deposits.

The coal-field now under consideration lies some miles away from Gran, and the shipping-place for the coal on the Danube is at Tata, a little above the city. I hired one of the common carts of the country (the usual vehicle), and drove across the plain skirting the picturesque wooded hills on the left, which connect, though with long intervals, the spurs of the Carpathians with the spurs of the Austrian Alps, and beyond the north-eastern extension of which, on the other side of the Danube, is the city of Chemnitz.

My object was to reach the village of Mogyoros, which I found at last nestled amongst the hills in a sweet wooded valley. It is a small village, consisting of only a few houses and a church. Some of the houses are of good size, and enclosed in pleasant, large, and well-filled gardens, and there was altogether an air of well-to-do comfort which I did not expect to find in such a place, especially as the road to it was execrable, and chiefly through ruts a foot deep.

After a little inquiry I succeeded in finding the gentleman whom I sought, and to whom I had a letter of introduction, and as he was just starting for his mines he took me with him. I found the whole neighbourhood in pretty much the same state, the surface consisting of rich alluvial soil, covering an alluvial sand. At a certain depth below this, I found that a simple boring operation was sufficient to determine the presence of a particular deposit of clay with marine shells, regarded as the sure precursor of coal. Wherever

this was found it was always regarded as ample evidence of a valuable seam, and the necessary shaft-sinkings for the purpose of extracting the coal were made in perfect security. If no result is obtained at a depth of 70 fathoms or thereabouts, a trial is made elsewhere and the unsuccessful boring abandoned.

The operation of coal mining is here very simple, and is not likely to interfere with the picturesque. The shafts being sunk through uniformly soft material, are necessarily strengthened with timber from the first, and the levels or tunnels, driven into the hill-side for the same purpose, are strengthened in the same way. The works are small, and such little shafts or levels numerous, for they are extremely inexpensive. The coal, once reached, is removed as rapidly as possible, and makes but little appearance on the surface. When the coal is gone and the roof has fallen in, the ground settles down a little, and cultivation goes on uninterruptedly at the surface, all marks being obliterated in a few years.

All this part of the Gran coal-field is on a hill or cliff, rising to a considerable height, and rather precipitous towards the river. The coal is run out or lifted to a convenient place, where it is loaded on small carts and sent away. No accumulation of stock can be made, and the daily extraction ought to agree as nearly as possible with the daily sale.

There are five properties in the immediate neighbourhood, most of them of the same nature and having about the same extent of workings as that which I

visited. I found that the coal, unscreened, could be sold, loaded on board barges or steamboats at Tata, at less than thirty Austrian kreutzers per cwt. (about 9s. 6d. per ton).* It is said that 80,000 tons have been annually extracted from the adjacent larger mine of Anna-thal, and no doubt the total yield of the district is very considerable.

Limestone and marble are quarried in the hills, not far from Mogyoros: some of the stone is used at Gran, and the rest carried away to a distance. The lime-stone is partly shelly and partly of the nature of travertine. Some of the marble is of good quality.

On the opposite side of the Danube, the small river Gran empties itself into the main stream. It runs through a valley which is described as being extremely picturesque. This river takes its rise at the foot of the Tatra, the finest of the northern Carpathian mountain groups, and runs past Neusohl, and not far from Chemnitz.

Returning to the village of Mogyoros, I was invited by my kind host to partake of his family meal, and did not find out till afterwards that my presence as a guest must have been at the moment very inconvenient. It is impossible to express too warmly my sense of the simple and genuine hospitality I received at the hands of this gentleman, who merely knew me as a stranger.

* At Pesth the price is about sixteen shillings per ton for the knobs alone, nearly the same for the mixed coal, and half that price for the powder.

who had been introduced by name only to some of his acquaintances in Pesth. Every possible information was given me, and not one question asked as to the object of my inquiries. I should add that the same liberal feeling seemed to prevail everywhere.

Next morning I left Gran, and found, as indeed I have often found before, that the charge for accommodation had no reference whatever to its quality. For a filthy bed in a filthy room I was expected to pay rather more than I had been charged at Pesth in one of the best hotels in Europe. I was also charged two florins (about four francs) for the use of a cart to drive to the railway station, a distance of about a mile. I mention this, that if any future traveller should make Gran a resting-place he may be prepared for the worst, and make special arrangement, if he desires to hire any vehicle from the inn. The name of the inn I do not remember; but it was the principal, and seemed the only one patronized by the porters who look out for steam-boat passengers.

From Gran to Presburg is a short railway journey. The town of Presburg is clean and well-built, and has some interesting buildings; but there is little that is Hungarian about it. The Danube, between Gran and Presburg, is remarkable for its numerous islands and for the great multitude of interlacing arms it presents. The Raab comes in from the west and the Waag from the east, both considerable streams, draining much country, and proceeding from mountainous districts. This division of the river is subject to periodical inun-

dations of great extent, often doing serious mischief. Several towns are passed, the most important being Komorn with its strong fortress, Gönyö, and Dotis. Komorn is interesting ; but the banks of the river are flat. Beyond Presburg, the frontier of Hungary is soon reached.

CHAPTER XIV.

Concluding Remarks on the Natural History and Mineral Resources of Hungary.—Sketch of its Political History and of Recent Changes.

IT may seem unreasonable that an author whose very title proclaims the short time he has taken to make acquaintance with a country, should undertake to offer general remarks in addition to his personal narrative of adventures.

The object in view, however, in publishing the narrative is to induce others to do as he has done—not, indeed, to follow strictly in his footsteps, but to regard Hungary as a country to be explored. And it is in order that he may carry out this object more thoroughly, that he ventures to offer in a short concluding chapter some remarks that may be useful and interesting to a future tourist, and save him the trouble of referring to other books.

The natural history of the Carpathians as a mountain chain is very little known, except as regards the northern part of the range, where, however, are some of the loftiest peaks. The natural history of the rest of Hungary is that of the great central European plains, and, though better known, is still by no means complete in any department. There are no glaciers in any part of the Carpathians, and little permanent snow,

but the winter snows are extremely heavy and last long, and it is not unlikely that careful investigation in spring might discover some results analogous to those of glacier action, arising from the movement of the snow masses converted into something not unlike glacier ice. The northern Carpathians generally, but above all the eastern group of them, promise great interest and novelty, and would certainly be worth a visit from any one who had time to devote to the subject. They are said to abound in points of view fully equal to the best of those in the Tyrolese Alps, and a few days spent in the neighbourhood of Kaschau would probably enable a traveller to select a route adapted to his peculiar taste in travel.* As a mountain chain, the Carpathians offer points of very great interest to the physical geographer, and they have the advantage of being comparatively little known.

Although the height of many of the Carpathian summits exceeds 8000 feet,† there does not appear to be

* Kaschau is the last station on the Theiss railway. It is a large town, and there are means of getting on from thence in several directions. It is perfectly accessible and convenient.

† The mountain Butschetje is marked in Murchison's "Geological Map of Europe," published by Johnson, as having an altitude of 9528 feet; but in Von Hauer's map, more recently published, from the Austrian surveys, it is stated at 1313 Austrian lachter, a little above 8000 feet. Eight thousand feet is generally quoted as the snow limit in this part of Europe, and the height quoted is probably a clerical error for 7528. The highest peaks of the North-western or Tatra group of the Carpathians are estimated at 8500, 8440, and 8288 feet respectively. .

any one of them that rises fairly beyond the limit of perpetual snow. At the same time, the snow is so late in departing, even from a much lower level than 8000 feet, that many of the conditions usual only where the earth is never bared, here obtain on ground that can occasionally be examined, and whose successive states, as they vary from year to year, are capable of close comparison.*

There is a good deal of difference in latitude, and much more in climate, between the Tatra and some of the other higher Carpathians towards Poland, and the lofty mountains of Retgezat and Barang, alluded to in this work, situated close to the Wallachian frontier. There are differences of other kinds, not less marked, between either of these and the eastern mountains, separating Hungary from the Buchovina and Moldavia. The cause of this must be sought in the varying influences of prevailing winds in different districts. Englishmen ought to be able to appreciate these influences, for our own country suffers much from some, and is much benefited by others of them. But in England, owing to the absence of lofty mountains within a moderate distance, the difference is less strongly marked than in central Europe. There can be no doubt that the south winds, the south-east, and the south-west winds coming from Africa, all produce

* The names of many of the mountains clearly shows how rarely the snow leaves them. We have the Eisthaler spizze, Schneekoppe, Schneeberg, and Schneekopf, besides others, all pointing to the same peculiarity.

definite results. But the effect of south winds on the south face of those of the mountains that look towards Wallachia and Moldavia, is different from that produced by the same winds, after they have been cooled, blowing on the south side of the mountains that separate Hungary from Poland and northern Galicia. The full extent of these influences has yet to be described, but it is certain that both vegetable and animal life are modified by agencies so well marked and so powerful.

The Carpathians require to be examined on both slopes with great care, to determine various meteorological points, and a series of comparative observations made at two or three stations with reference to temperature, barometer-pressure, rain-fall, and other climatal peculiarities, would be very suggestive. It may be well to remind the proposed visitor, that the side of the mountains towards Wallachia and Galicia would not generally be found so easy of access as the side towards Hungary, and that in many places the distance from convenient stations would be great. This is not the case, however, with the country near Kronstadt, and the principal passes across all parts of the chain might, no doubt, be crossed in summer with facility. The north flanks of the mountains towards Poland are easily visited from the towns on the railway beyond Krakow to the east.

The botany of the Carpathians is interesting, both in its general physical relations, and in detail. "The general differences of the Carpathian vegetation and

that, of the north of Switzerland, seems to be that there is greater local diversity in the Carpathians; the richer vegetation of its two flanks disappears much more quickly towards the central masses, that is, the altitudinal limits are lower, so that the summits are exceedingly poor and barren, having a Piedmontese or Tyrolese character rather than a Swiss. The spruce forests terminate much lower down, so that the Alpine region is comparatively much more extensive, having a range of 3400 feet, while in Switzerland it has only 270, and in Lapland, between the birch and the snow, only 1500 feet."

These remarks, by the late Professor Henfrey ("Vegetation of Europe," p. 242), are accompanied by an intimation of the probable reason for such a condition, namely, the excessive nature of the climate, depriving the upper regions of the atmosphere of that continuous supply of moisture with which the Alps abound, and producing an effect somewhat analogous to that met with on the summit of Mount Etna.

The sterility of the upper regions of the Carpathians as a natural history fact seems sufficiently determined so far as regards the Tatra and other mountains in the north. On this point the evidence of Wahlenberg cannot be questioned. It is, however, deprived of some of its weight by the fact that the altitude of the mountains seems to have been considerably underestimated. A significant modification of the above remarks is suggested by the fact that in the Carpathians the exceptions to the barren condition of the surface consist of plants of a succulent habit, whose

roots are large and fleshy. Among the most remarkable is mentioned the *Senatula pygmæa*, "which makes one wonder," says Professor Henfrey, "how its soft and fleshy leaves find nourishment on the dry rock." It is at any rate clear that the variety of species on these mountains is small, on the slopes as well as summits of the most northern of the chain.

But it does not follow that this is the case on the southern group of mountains near Wallachia. The trees here rise to a much greater elevation, and the beech appears to flourish much better and higher than in the Alps. There is also here a Fauna as well as Flora that speaks of southern influences and affinities.

The lower Alpine region in the Carpathians is remarkable for the extreme abundance of the *Pinus mughus*, a dull and useless tree, growing some two feet high in open places, and often sheltering a large amount of handsome and interesting vegetation. Many field plants and others grow here, under this shelter, at a higher elevation than in Switzerland, although the tree vegetation would appear to point in a contrary direction. A grass (*Poa disticha*) is the only socially-growing plant that appears when this shelter is withdrawn. The azaleas and rhododendrons do not adorn the slopes and nestle among the snows, as in the Alps, and although the *Veronica* and species of *Ranunculus* are not wanting, there does not seem the variety or beauty that is met with further to the west at a similar elevation.

Of the special botany, there is much that is interest-

ing, especially with regard to the plains of the Theiss and its tributaries. The influence of the somewhat excessive climate is felt, and the value of this may be estimated by the fact that, whereas the mean annual temperature at Pesth (57°) is one degree higher than at Vienna, the mean summer temperature (70°) is two degrees higher, and that of winter (31°) only one degree lower. The difference between winter and summer means is ten degrees greater than at Paris.

Of the special zoology of the mountain district of Eastern Hungary, very little is described. The wild animals of large size, both birds and beasts, are certainly numerous and interesting. Some of the quadrupeds have been already alluded to. The birds are especially remarkable, and fine specimens are to be seen in the museum at Pesth. They include eagles and vultures, surpassing in beauty and size those of most parts of Europe. There are also both reptiles and fishes, certainly not exceeded in interest by those of any European nation. Of the lower animals I am not in a position to give much information, although the student of this department of natural history may find much material of great interest in the national museum.

But the mineralogy and geology are departments of which more is known. Many enterprising travellers have visited the better-known districts, and have given long and valuable descriptions of their travels. The Baron Born and Dr. Townsend in the last century, and M. Beudant in the early part of the present

century, have done good work that requires only to be brought into form in reference to improved geological methods to have great value and abiding interest. In all respects, also, Hungary is worth careful investigation for mineral wealth, for not only is there a quantity of gold far exceeding all elsewhere found in Europe, but there are other valuable metals and precious minerals, among the latter of which the varieties of opal and the celebrated specimens of silicified wood are best worthy of notice. All have been found in a quantity sufficient to repay the cost of working, and certainly they take rank among the material resources of the country. Opalized wood has been known to occur abundantly in Transylvania from a very early period.

The precious metals and precious stones are more real and valuable in the estimate of the mineral wealth of Hungary than in that of any other European country. The former are not only very widely distributed, but are really large in quantity, and can be worked with some prospect of permanent success. They occur in regular veins, and the gold is also found in the more ordinary and better-known sandy and gravelly deposits common in Australia and California.

The operations carried on at the regular mining establishments under the superintendence of a government officer, are of a different kind, and on a different scale, from those of the smaller people, who only operate for themselves. The mines at Oravicza and Nagyag are the most important of the former,

and are certainly very interesting, although they can hardly be regarded as very profitable. In both gold is obtained from veins of some regularity, and in both the conditions under which the gold exists, and the metals as well as minerals with which it is associated are distinct and characteristic.* Silver is found occasionally in a native state, but is not one of the principal metals. It is more frequently mixed with galena.

Gold mining and washing for gold have always been favourite occupations in Hungary, and the washing operations have been so far systematized that a century ago the gypsies and Wallachians of the lower class were forced to pay a poll-tax of a fixed quantity of gold, which could only be thus raised. They are, and always were, skilful in washing, using a wooden tray covered with woollen cloth, which will catch the fine but heavy particles of gold, and prevent them from being carried away. With fine sands this method is very effectual, and for coarser gravels a ribbed board answers the purpose.

Another method of gold washing has, however, been very common, numerous pits being dug, over which the stream with its auriferous gravel was made to pass. The gold dust and small nuggets of gold were caught in the pit, and the rich deposits thus accumulated, were afterwards separated by washing. Besides

* The tellurium of Nagyag must still be regarded rather as a scientific curiosity than a mineral of value for any practical purposes. Rare elsewhere, it is comparatively abundant in the Nagyag veins.

these two methods the removal and pounding up of stone suspected to contain gold has been largely carried on where the quantity of water was sufficient.

All these methods are alluded to to show how completely Hungary has been, and even still is, a gold-producing country in an economic sense. The pursuit of gold is as much a regular and systematic labour as it ever can be in any country. It has probably existed as one of the common and remunerative employments of the people as long as civilized men have inhabited the country.

Lead ore, where found, is more usually valuable for the silver contained in it than for the quantity of lead it produces, but there are lead mines in Hungary of considerable interest and of great antiquity. One of them, "Felso-Banya," is interesting as having almost proved fatal to Baron Born, one of the most intelligent and earliest authors on Hungarian science and natural history.

The ore is arsenical, and it was in that day the custom to apply heat to render the work of removing the ore from the vein more easy. Descending on one occasion into the mine somewhat too soon after an operation of this kind had been performed the Baron was almost suffocated by the arsenical vapours, and his constitution received a shock from which he never afterwards recovered.*

* The following extract of a letter from Baron Born to his friend Professor Ferber on this subject will be interesting to

The workings in this mine of Felso-Banya are described as extensive, and the veins gigantic, varying from three to nearly fifty feet in width. Galena, zinc blende, and iron pyrites occur here together in one vein, mixed up with orpiment and ores of antimony. Comparatively little silver is here intermixed with the lead. Native gold is occasionally found in the lead veins.

Elsewhere the silver-lead ores are more abundant, and in many of the southern and south-eastern districts, the latter of which have chiefly been described in this work, there is abundant proof of the richness as well as antiquity of the mining operations. There cannot be a shadow of doubt, however, that the whole of this frontier land of the Banat might still

many readers:—“*Nagy Banya, Aug. 22, 1770.*—My long silence is the consequence of an unhappy accident which was very near putting an end to my life. To examine the common firing at Felso-Banya, and the great effects produced by so small an expense of wood, I visited the great mine when the fire was hardly burnt down, and when the mine was still filled with smoke. An accident made me tarry somewhat longer in the shaft by which the smoke went off. In short, I lost my senses, and, fifteen hours after, I was restored to myself by blisters and other applications. My lips were swoln, my eyes ran with blood, and my limbs in general lamed. A violent coughing and acute pains in the loins, which alternately put me on the rack, are, I fear, more than sufficient to destroy this thinly-framed machine.” He adds, “If that should be the case, then I desire to have my name inserted in the Martyrology of Naturalists.”—*Travels through the Banat, &c.*

be the subject of searching investigation for mineral wealth with great prospect of success.*

Iron has been mentioned in Chaps. III. and VIII. as a metal of which the ores are found in some parts of Hungary, especially at Telek, near Hunyad, in valleys opening out to the Maros, and also in the Banat. Here, and in many other places, the ores are exceedingly abundant, and generally very rich. But they are not always favourably situated, and are by no means adapted for profitable working on a large scale. The iron mines near Hunyad, described in a former chapter, afford good evidence of this. They have been certainly well known for a very long period. They were worked by the Romans, and probably by the Dacians before them. They have perhaps never ceased being worked since that time, and always probably at a small profit. But it is certain that nothing but railway communication, and abundance of good fuel at a moderate cost, would make them of national importance. When such advantages can be obtained they may probably take the first place.

Copper is worked at Oravicza, as well as at several other places in the Banat and elsewhere in Hungary. Near Saska, and between Oravicza and Dognaczka, are innumerable traces and some mines of a very remarkable kind. One extremely interesting deposit of ore worked during the last century in the Morawiz

* The neighbourhood of Dognaczka is, perhaps, the richest of the older localities for silver ores ; and some of the old mines were very profitable.

mountains is mentioned by Born in some detail. His remarks are worth quoting, as in a country where one such remarkable condition takes place it is not unlikely that the same causes may have produced others. He tells us that in these mines in his time several junctions of veins and parts of veins combined to form an accumulation of ore of extraordinary size and richness. The full dimensions of the largest part of the deposit (which was oval shaped) were upwards of 150 feet in length, and 120 feet wide, the extreme depth of the mass being 240 feet. Of course this rich treasure was soon removed, and nothing like it has since been found, but if there is one such pocket there are probably more.

The annual yield of the copper mines of Hungary in the time of Mr. Paget was about 2000 tons, but this quantity has not greatly increased, and the workings, except in one or two points, are now small and irregular.

Smolniz was formerly celebrated for its copper, and the veins there seem to have been very rich and promising. Silver was mixed with the common ores. Schemnitz and Kremnitz are the other chief mining centres, and these yield silver in some quantity. The ores, however, that present admixtures of this kind cannot be regarded either as the most convenient or the most profitable for working in a general way.

Mercury has been found in more than one mining district in this rich country. At Zalathna are two

mines that have in former times been very much explored. The other locality is to the south of the Baboju mountain, and is described by Born. Cinnabar seems to be the ore, but native mercury, though not mentioned, would no doubt be found.

Antimony is not rare in the mineral veins in most of the mining districts, but the quantity does not seem large enough to be of much importance. Gold is found with it, as indeed with most of the ores.

Arsenic is seldom found anywhere in the metallic or native state, but is common enough in Hungary, as already intimated, combined with other metals and with sulphur.

Tellurium has been already alluded to. It is decidedly more curious than useful at the present time.

Among the miscellaneous minerals of Hungary salt must take a very high rank, and the deposits of it are probably the largest in the world. Not only do a vast multitude of salt-springs proceed from the flanks of the mountains, but there are salt-lakes of no mean proportions still left, and as many as 159 distinct localities are mentioned in books as capable of yielding a large supply, should it be required. These are mostly on the north side of the country, and away from the district described in these pages; but they are well worth careful investigation. The deposit at Marmaros is said to be an exact repetition of that worked at Wieliczka, near Krakow; but the one mass is on the south and the other on the north side of the great Carpathian chain. The Marmaros deposit, commencing at Eperies, some distance from Kaschau (the present

railway terminus of the Theiss railway) extends as far as Kronstadt. Besides common salt, there are deposits, of some extent, of other saline earths. One of these yields soda, of which large quantities are exported.

Sulphur is a mineral common in certain parts of Hungary—so common, indeed, that Mr. Paget mentions several instances in which it was not considered as worth working. Combined with iron, it is even more common; and arsenic, as usual, is not absent from the combination.

The great and valuable stores of natural wealth existing in the coal-mines of Hungary, whether at present worked or likely to be worked before long, have been alluded to in the preceding pages, so that very few words are necessary here. There will, however, be some advantage in connecting the results in a few general expressions.

The coal of Hungary is of almost all geological ages, and though none of it is first-rate in point of quality, a large proportion is excellent fuel. There are one or two known deposits, of singularly small size, belonging to the period when all the valuable coal of western Europe was accumulated; but the deposits of the best quality, small, no doubt, in actual dimensions, but still very useful, seem to correspond rather with the coals of India and Central Asia. The coals most valued at the present moment in Hungary are those of the secondary, and not those of the palæozoic period.

But the great body of the coal of Hungary is very much newer. It is tertiary, and, till lately, the whole of it was regarded as of comparatively modern date.

There is no doubt, however, that while much of the coal of the valley of the Danube and its tributaries consists of isolated patches of lignite, containing a good deal of ash and some water, and falling to pieces on exposure, there is in the Zsil valley a splendid deposit of true coal, of a period more ancient than the Danube coals, but still tertiary.

With all these sources of wealth; with such noble rivers, and such rich plains; with so fine a climate, and surrounded by, if not containing, so many industrious populations, it would be lamentable indeed, if Hungary were not soon to rise from its present position and become a prominent country in Europe. Certainly, the mineral and vegetable resources of the land, and the natural facilities for transport of goods, are such as to encourage every hope of a speedy realization of so desirable a result.

But an important point here suggests itself for consideration. How are the Hungarians to occupy the position they ought to attain, and how far do their political relations with Austria interfere with their material progress? It is certain that Austria and the Austrians are not at one with Hungary and the Hungarians. Whose is the fault, and what are the chances of remedying the evil?

To understand the state of Hungary with reference to these questions, and to the chance of future tranquillity, a glance at its political condition and recent history seems absolutely essential, and perhaps a few pages on the subject may be useful, to put the English reader in possession of facts once learned, it may be,

but little remembered, owing to the small importance of Hungarian politics in Western Europe.

Ever since the year 1723 the House of Austria has governed Hungary according to a law of succession clearly stated and distinctly understood; and the union between Austria and Hungary, produced by the fusion of the reigning families of the two countries by intermarriage, was always real, although the countries possessed distinct fundamental laws and other political institutions. Unfortunately, an attempt was made in the last century by the Emperor Joseph II. to centralize Hungarian institutions. The Hungarians never gave way to this innovation, or accepted the reforms, administrative or otherwise, then suggested; and a spirit of opposition to Austria, then first created, though lulled for a time during the great European wars of the French Revolution, broke out again in 1825. On this occasion the immediate cause of quarrel was the neglect of the king to convocate a Diet, and the monarch was obliged to give way.

From 1825 to 1839 the king's government in Hungary was more and more frequently and seriously opposed in the Diet. A constitutional party had, indeed, sprung up, whose professed object was to promote administrative reforms, and resist all attempt to effect a political separation of Hungary from Austria. This latter revolutionary attempt was already an acknowledged object of the opposition party in the Diet. It did not then seem likely to become popular, but the assumption of power and influence by the national assembly was becoming by degrees more and more dis-

tinct, and could not fail to be distasteful to the Archduke Joseph, who had long been the Palatine or Regent of Hungary, and was much liked. Although, until his death in 1847, this prince succeeded in smoothing the constantly-increasing difficulties and avoiding the dangers that were from time to time arising in his path, the change was impending, and continued peace was impossible.

The revolutionary principles gradually advanced, and not being checked by any very moderate or steady course adopted by the Government, may be said to have culminated when, in 1844, the question of commercial relations with Austria was mooted, and the agitation was removed from the benches of the Diet to the hall of the Comitát of Pesth. A society was then formed, whose members discouraged among their own friends and in every possible way the consumption of all foreign produce, and under the name of “Protection League” put forth this dangerous and foolish impediment to the progress of industry. A “Young Magyar” party was also formed, whose real intention, under the guise of patriotism, was to separate from Austria, rather than to reform the institutions of the country.

The session of the Diet of 1847 would thus, under any circumstances, have been exciting; but it might have led only to alterations involving improvement. Many reforms previously suggested were accepted by the Government, and seemed likely to be carried. The king opened the Diet by a speech in the Hungarian language, and the feeling was universal that nationality had triumphed without revolution. But this was not

to last. The measures of Government were attacked, and great excitement produced by the revolutionary party; and in the midst of this excitement Europe was convulsed by the events that occurred in Paris, in the month of February, 1848.

No sooner was the public mind thus affected than an address was proposed in the Diet, demanding a separate, independent, and responsible ministry for Hungary, liberty of the press, freedom of association, a national guard, and a general representation of the nation not only for Hungary itself, but also for Austria. At the same time Austria itself was in a state of almost equal excitement, and Prince Metternich, the representative of arbitrary power, was compelled to resign. A separate ministry was granted to Hungary in a modified form and to a limited extent; but the rest of the demand was evaded, and it was clear that there was no quiet settlement at hand.

In the month of June, 1848, the Diet at Pesth was opened, and within a month there was an open rupture between the king and the new Hungarian ministry; the Crown refusing to grant that a levy of 20,000 men should be made, under the pretence of forming a national guard, and refusing also to sanction the issue of a large quantity of paper notes for Hungarian currency.

After a succession of events—unfortunate for the national cause, if the only object of those holding responsible positions was to obtain a rational liberty for their country—the war broke out in earnest, and an open rupture took place between the Emperor of

Austria as King of Hungary and his Hungarian subjects. Owing, as it would seem, to the urgent pressure produced by Kossuth, the Hungarians were the first to proclaim war, and their army moved across the frontier to attack Austria. They were defeated on the 30th October, at Schwechat, and preparations were actively made for a final and severe struggle.

At the close of 1848, the throne of Hungary was left vacant by the abdication of Ferdinand and Francis Charles, and a change in the Government was anticipated on the accession of Francis Joseph, who had previously been a great favourite in Hungary. But the Hungarians questioned the right of Ferdinand to abdicate without leave, nor has the present king ever been crowned or fully accepted as the rightful successor to the throne.

Very soon, however, dissensions among the leaders of the revolution began to appear. General Görgey acting with, and representing the army he commanded, declared that he was in arms only for the laws of April, 1848, and the lawful king, Ferdinand. The other party in the State, among whom Kossuth ranked as chief, adopted another military commander. He, however, was obliged to give way, and Görgey, by a series of skilful manœuvres, held the Austrians at bay for a long time, forcing them to retire, and to break up the siege they had commenced against Comorn. He took Buda after a siege of seventeen days, and sat down before Arad and Temeswár.

By this time the revolution had entered on an entirely new phase. Kossuth had been appointed Governor of

Hungary, a republic had been declared, and Austria and the king were altogether ignored. On the other hand, Russia, seeing that Austria was hardly able to withstand the pressure on all sides, and not wishing to have a Hungarian republic so near at hand, combined with the Vienna Government to quash this movement. A large Russian army crossed the frontier, effected a junction with General Haynau, who commanded the Austrians, and once more took an active part in advance. Görgey was not strong enough to resist the combined army, and on the 26th June, being outflanked by the united forces of the Russians and Austrians, was defeated at the battle of Raab.

Another Russian army, under Paskiewitch, was now advancing southward from the plains of the upper Theiss, and there was no course open to Görgey but to retreat into the Carpathians towards the north, or, crossing the Danube, to hide himself in the unapproachable country in the south. He selected the latter as the wisest course, but was defeated in the attempt. He then endeavoured to proceed northwards, and although not able to penetrate the Russian centre, he made an extraordinary forced march of nearly 400 miles in twenty-four days, and arrived at Arad with his army on the 10th August, after fighting several battles on his way with detachments of the enemy.

While these only partially unsuccessful movements were taking place under Görgey, the other rulers of the national party, Dembinski and Bem, had been defeated, first in detail, and then combined. The battle of Temeswár, fought on the 9th of August, completely

destroyed all hope, and nothing remained but to crush the remaining national forces as they came in the way. After the battle of Temeswár, the Austrians pressed forward towards Arad while the Russians were coming down from the north, and by means of large detachments they prevented all manœuvring on the part of the Hungarian general to escape into Transylvania. Görgey was thus forced to capitulate at Világos with the remainder of his army, amounting to 25,000 men, and the revolution was at an end.

But the revolution at an end, and the power of the "Young Magyar" party completely broken, the Austrian and Russian generals had unfortunately not received instructions to temper severity with mercy, and no endeavour was made to restore the mass of the Hungarian nation to their former state of union with Austria under proper restrictions, securing the essentials, and punishing only the guilty.

Haynau, the Austrian general, little regarding the motives of the people or the bravery they had shown, permitted and encouraged the most brutal excesses, waded through a sea of blood when no opposition was offered to his further advance, and seems to have thrown off all feelings and sentiments of humanity in the excitement and scent of fresh blood. Hecatombs of victims fell, and the whole country seemed likely to be decimated. All officials who had in any way joined the national party were condemned, and one at least of every class in every town was positively doomed to suffer, and did suffer, a disgraceful death. Women, noble and patriotic, influenced by the highest and best

motives, were treated as degraded beings, and subjected to ignominious treatment. No victim was too mean, none too powerful for his vengeance; and neither Hungary nor the rest of Europe will easily forget the name of the infamous tyrant who was afterwards reminded in the streets of London of the estimation in which he was held by a free people.

The system, as set on foot by the conqueror, has been more or less carried out since. Not, indeed, to the disgraceful extent, but with the same foolish policy. Thus an attempt unjustifiable and needless in itself—a political separation desirable in no sense either for Hungary, for Austria, or for Europe—a political impossibility in the present state of Europe—has unfortunately become an idea sanctified by the martyrdom of its advocates, and more and more fixed in the Magyar mind.

The dismemberment of Austria is, however, not likely to take place. The Magyar, although possessed of many admirable qualities, has not of himself a sufficient nationality to exist alone. Even Hungary is not entirely peopled by the Magyar race, and the old Hungarian system is not altogether popular. There is a large German, a Servian, and a Wallachian element in the country, and the mass of the population cares too little about a separate nationality, to fight to the death for such an idea. Even during the war, when Görgey, at the head of a large and well-appointed army, was able, for a time, to resist Austria, and might have succeeded, but for the intervention of Russia, in throwing off the Austrian yoke,—even then there was no real

union among the people. While there was yet pressure from without, and the battle of independence was raging, the various peoples of Hungary were fighting with each other. In Transylvania the Wallachian peasantry rose against the Magyar proprietors. In the Banat the Servians opposed both Magyars and Germans. In the Siebenbürgen the Germans resisted. Arad was held, Temeswár was held, and even Buda, for a long time, was held successfully against the national party, and in each were many Magyars true to their constitutional monarch. There is not in Hungary such a union of races, or so large a population of one kind as to justify a separation, nor are there any important border populations with whom to fraternize and unite.

The Magyar stands alone in Europe. There may or may not be a foundation for what is called Panslavism, but for Magyarism there seems no political possibility.

On the other hand, there is a great material prosperity open to Hungary if the people will be content to be quietly governed, and if Austria is wise enough to relax a little in the bureaucratic notions that now influence her. It is the unfortunate, but apparently hopeless, weakness of the German to centralize everything, and to govern by a strict bureaucracy. This, no doubt, is a perpetual and distressing annoyance to a people so differently constituted as the Magyar; and herein lies a great difficulty, for the German is as hard to convince as the Hungarian is to accustom himself to a new method.

Since the revolution there has been but one prevailing idea in Vienna with regard to Hungary, that of absorbing it into the rest of the Empire. On the other hand Hungary strives, by bringing back into use its old language, by standing apart, and not mixing with its neighbours, and by increasing its internal resources, to occupy a definite and isolated position. It is not easy to see what will be the end of such an antagonism.

It is hoped that this sketch of the changes that have, within the last fifteen years, so seriously affected Hungary and so entirely altered its condition in many respects, may assist the reader inclined to visit the country to form a correct notion of its present political state, and understand the bitter and uncomfortable feeling of opposition that prevails between the governors and a large and important section of the governed. That this will lead to actual outbreak may be considered as very doubtful; but where a people believe themselves to be trampled on, and there is a constant irritation kept up, it is quite impossible to answer for the consequences. Little danger to the traveller, however, from this cause need be apprehended, and in all other respects no country in Europe is more easy of access or more interesting.

THE END.

